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A BRIEF AND IMPARTIAL

HISTORY

OF THE

PURITANS;

REPRESENTING THEIR

PRINCIPLES AND SUFFERINGS,

WITH

OCCASIONAL OBSERVATIONS.

By the AUTHOR of the

SERIOUS AND EARNEST ADDRESS

TO

PROTESTANT DISSENTERS.

They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. John xvi. 2.

Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition. 1 Cor. x. 11

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ADVERTISEMENT.

IT cannot be expected that every material circumſtance ſhould be recorded in ſo ſmall a pamphlet, and indeed I found a great difficulty in ſelecting the moſt ſtriking facts and obſervations, and was obliged after all to omit much of what I had written; though this contains more than the Serious Addreſs, *which has increaſed the expence of printing, but could not induce me to raiſe the price. A worthy friend (as one inſtance amongſt many of the ill effects of eſtabliſhments) deſired me to take notice of the caſe of Mr. Jebb, who propoſed reading at Cambridge, a courſe of lectures on the Four Goſpels, Critical and Explanatory, and two lectures on the* 1 Cor. xv. *His deſign was to inveſtigate the plain obvious meaning of the paſſages before him, without profeſſedly attacking or defending doctrines, ſtrictly admoniſhing the ſtudents who attended to ſtudy without any partiality, and always to keep in view, the great end of religion—the making men wiſer and better. This was done with the entire conſent and approbation of the Vice Chancellor; but, wonderful to relate, he was ſoon violently oppoſed and accuſed with holding opinions of the moſt dangerous tendency, and as profeſſedly endeavouring to overturn* eſtabliſhed *doctrines, by inculcating upon the minds of his pupils, a ſet of opinions in oppoſition to thoſe which had received the ſanction of* eccleſiaſtical authority. *This behaviour has obliged him to appeal to the impartial public.—See a Short Account of Theological Lectures, now reading at Cambridge, by the Rev. John Jebb, quarto. I ſhall ſay nothing more on this affair, than that it puts me in mind of a perſon, who about three centuries ago was charged, by the then clergy of the church of England, with publiſhing a book called the goſpel of St. Matthew, containing diverſe, wicked, and damnable hereſies.*

N. B. The reader is deſired to pardon the errata, which it is hoped are not material.

A BRIEF AND IMPARTIAL

HISTORY

OF THE

PURITANS.

CHAP. I.

THE ſucceſs which has attended the ſale of the *Serious and Earneſt Addreſs*, &c. has inclined me to publiſh this hiſtory, ſince next to underſtanding the principles of our diſſent, the conſideration of what our anceſtors ſuffered in this cauſe muſt afford the moſt animating motives to perſiſt in them. The prophets, who had ſpoken in the name of the Lord, were recommended to the primitive Chriſtians *as examples of ſuffering affliction, and of patience.* James v. 10. And notwithſtanding the diſſipation of the preſent age, and that diſregard to religion which almoſt univerſally prevails, there are ſome, it is to be hoped, as yet remaining, who, by proper information, and the conduct of their brave foreſathers, may be ſtirred up to a ſteady reſolution of oppoſing every thing contrary or prejudicial to pure genuine Chriſtianity. The hiſtory of the Puritans is a copious ſubject worthy of being largely conſidered. This attempt muſt be very brief, but it ſhall be impartial. Their ſufferings ſhall not be aggravated, it would be needleſs; their faults ſhall not be palliated, it would be unjuſt.

The cruelties of church men and party bigots, it is well known, have prejudiced ſome againſt religion itſelf. Chriſtianity is a moſt noble inſtitution and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for inſtruction in righteouſneſs, is fitted to make the man of God perfect in every good word and work, and

breaths a ſpirit of love and peace, calculated to produce the moſt happy effects. But, by the craft and ſubtlety of wicked men, theſe deſirable ends have been greatly fruſtrated, and its profeſſors turning aſide to vain jangling inſtead of loving one another, and being kindly affectioned towards all, have been ſtirred up with a moſt infernal malice to hate, perſecute, and murder their brethren on any real or even imaginary difference of opinion. Some have been led from hence to affirm, that the revelation of Jeſus Chriſt hath done more harm than good. Such a charge is very falſe and ill-grounded. For ſince the New Teſtament contains nothing but what has the moſt direct tendency to promote peace and happineſs, it is as abſurd to charge it with the vices of its profeſſors, as to affirm that the ſun is of no ſervice, becauſe, if a man ſhuts his eyes, he cannot ſee its light And whatever doctrines or practices cannot be proved from the New Teſtament, though they may indeed make part of the eſtabliſhed religion of the church of Rome, of the church of England, or of any other church, national or particular, they are not Chriſtanity. Conſequently it is unfair and unjuſt to impute theſe miſchiefs thereto, which not only proceed from another ſource, but are expreſsly contrary to its ſpirit Such is all dominion over the faith, and ſuch are all impoſitions upon the conſciences of men.

This wicked ſpirit began to work very early. Acts xv. 1—10. Gal. i. 7. Diotrephes, who loved the preheminence, oppoſed the apoſtle John. 3 Ep. v. 9. The apoſtle well knew, by the ſpirit of prophecy, that before the final coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, there would come a falling away. 2 Theſ. ii. 3. And foretells the progreſs of the man of ſin, in language very deſcriptive of the popes of Rome. The ſpirit ſpeaketh expreſsly that ſome ſhall depart from the faith, and their particular errors are mentioned. 1 Tim. iv. 1—4. The church of Epheſus ſoon left its firſt love, and doctrines hateful to God were broached amongſt them. Rev. ii. 4—6. And it was too much the caſe with the other churches. But though hereſies and corrupt doctrines ſprang up in abundance, by which means many were drawn from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt Jeſus,

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his religion nevertheleſs increaſed and multiplied, when labouring with the moſt violent oppoſition, the moſt cruel perſecution, and the keeneſt hatred of violent and furious men actuated by a ſpirit like that of devils. It ran and was glorified in theſe trying times, but when the emperor Conſtantine turned Chriſtian, religion began to be connected with the ſtate. Then temporal powers, temporal honours, and temporal emoluments were beſtowed on the clergy, and the true ſpirit of the goſpel was ſoon loſt. It has been pathetically ſaid, that when the church was firſt endowed with revenues an angel in the air cried out, "Woe, woe, woe, this day is venom ſhed into the church of God." Corrupt doctrines ſprang up thicker and faſter, traditions multiplied, and ignorance increaſed. For many centuries the very appearance of Chriſtianity was loſt on the earth, or at beſt hid in ſome ſecret corner. A worſe than Pagan darkneſs ſucceeded.

At length about the year 1370, our countryman John Wickliffe, whoſe memory is ever to be revered, began to oppoſe the high powers, and the unreaſonable encroachments of that man of ſin the pope, and expoſed the falſehood of the prevailing doctrines. His preaching and writing excited the attention of many; they were indeed, when compared to thoſe who defended the eſtabliſhed ſuperſtitions, but ſmall; yet a candle was lighted which could never be put out. Many were converted from the reigning errors; many in England offered their bodies to be burnt, and expired in the flames, in teſtimony to the truth. Amongſt theſe, that illuſtrious ſufferer Lord Cobham was the moſt remarkable. Before he knew Wickliffe (as himſelf ſaid) he never abſtained from ſin; but after he was acquainted with that virtuous man, he ſaw his errors, and he hoped reformed them. The prieſts were much exaſperated againſt this great man, and by a cruel law againſt heretics obtained by their craft, together with a falſe and groundleſs charge of treaſon, they got him to be condemned as a heretic and traytor. He, with the intrepidity of a hero, and the reſignation of a Chriſtian, ſuffered a moſt cruel death, being hung up alive by the middle with iron chains on a gallows, under which a

fire being made, he was burnt to death. So great was the cruelty of the prieſts, that they did not refrain from curſes and execrations, even whilſt the noble victim was in the flames; and even endeavoured to prevent the people who ſurrounded from praying for him. This is the true ſpirit of popery which is always the ſame, deſigning men will indeed put on a face of moderation here, but the inquiſition has lately afforded ſimilar inſtances. Wickliffe's writings were not confined to England, but being carried over into Germany, ſowed the ſeeds of a plentiful harveſt. In Bohemia the truth flouriſhed greatly; many were privately put to death in priſon, though the papiſts had ſolemnly promiſed they ſhould not be hurt, and the chiefs, John Huſs and Jerome of Prague, (the former by the treachery of the prieſts, after an expreſs promiſe of ſafe conduct from the emperor) were burnt alive.

About the year 1517, the great Luther, being incenſed at the abominable lewdneſs and immorality occaſioned by the pope's indulgences, which were ſold at a fixed price, as a deliverance from the guilt and puniſhment of the moſt heinous ſins, and a licence to commit future ones oppoſed them with all his might. Glorious ſucceſs attended this great champion, and the miſt of popiſh darkneſs began to be diſpelled in the countries which had long been buried in night. After ſo many years of ignorance, it was not to be expected, that pure, uncorrupted truth ſhould be immediately reſtored. Great was the learning, the piety, and the fortitude of our firſt reformers, the progreſs they made amazing, but thoſe who came after might nevertheleſs ſee room for alterations, and if not equal in abilities be able to point out real defects. A dwarf placed on a giant's head can ſee farther than the giant. Therefore to brand every attempt for a farther reformation, as an inſult on the memory of our firſt reformers is abſurd. They began and carried on an excellent work, but left it to their poſterity to perfect it, by attempting which however the Puritans endured cruel hardſhips.

Henry VIII. actually broke off from the church of Rome, by denying the pope's ſupremacy, and ſuffered the Bible to be tranſlated into Engliſh. This prince however

ever had a fond attachment to many popiſh errors, and that party retained ſuch power throughout his reign, that many fires were kindled in different parts of the kingdom. Some papiſts ſuffered for denying his ſupremacy, but denying the doctrines of popery made many martyrs. But truth prevailed, and the flames in which they expired ſerved widely to ſpread the light.

The reformation made a quick progreſs, in the ſhort reign of that pious prince Edward VI. who had been educated under proteſtant tutors, and was as remarkable for his learning, ſweetneſs of temper, and humble deportment as his zeal for this good work. Articles of religion were drawn up (forty-two in number, three of which were afterwards left out, and ſome alterations made in the others.) Many ſuperſtitious practices laid aſide, and a reformation intended in the governemnt and laws of the church. But his noble deſigns were obſtructed by ſome temporizing biſhops, who having complied with the impoſitions of Henry VIII. were willing to bring others under the ſame yoke.

The controverſy which gave riſe to the ſeparation began in this reign. It muſt therefore have been through extreme ignorance, that ſome have boaſted of the ſuperior antiquity of the church of England to the riſe of the nonconformiſts. A weak argument at beſt, though it has influence upon ſome minds. Popery is older than the church of England, Judaiſm than either, and Paganiſm than all. This argument however is not merely weak, it is falſe. Biſhop Hooper refuſed to be conſecrated in the uſual habits, and though to ſome this may ſeem an unreaſonable ſcruple, yet it was certainly an affair of great conſequence, at the infancy of the reformation, when the habits were the known badges of popery, and the adminiſtrations of the prieſts were thought to receive the validity from theſe ſacred veſtments. 'Tis well if many do not think this of the ſurplice now. The good biſhop refuſed them for ſeveral weighty and important reaſons. Becauſe they had no foundation in the ſcripture; becauſe they were the inventions of antichriſt; becauſe they had been abuſed to ſuperſtition and idolatry; and to continue the uſe of

them he thought was to ſymbolize with antichriſt, to miſlead the people, and was inconſiſtent with the ſimplicity of the Chriſtian religion. Thoſe eminent reformers, Bucer and Peter Martyr, with the proteſtant divines of Geneva and Switzerland, gave their opinions againſt them as inventions of antichriſt, and wiſhed them to be removed out of the church. But though Cranmer was ready to yield, the other biſhops would not, ſo after treating this excellent man (who was one of the firſt that ſuffered martydom, being burnt at Glouceſter in the next reign) in a moſt ſevere manner, by impriſoning him ſome months in the Fleet; upon the earneſt entreaty of his brethren, that he would comply rather than be buried in ſilence, when his preaching was ſo much wanted, he conſented to be robed in the habits at his conſecration and once at court, but to be diſpenſed with at other times. Accordingly, being appointed to preach once before the king, he came forth, ſays Mr. Fox, like a new player on the ſtage, in white and ſcarlet, with a ſquare cap on his head, but he took it patiently for the public ſervice of the church.

He then went down to his dioceſe where he preached two or three times a day to crouds of people that hungred for the word of life. He was faithful and zealous in every branch of his epiſcopal duty even beyond his ſtrength, and great ſucceſs attended his labours at a time when ſuch were greatly wanted.

Moſt of the reforming clergy ſided with biſhop Hooper in this controverſy. The biſhops Latimer and Coverdale, the doctors Taylor, Philpot, Bradford, and others, who all laid down their lives for the proteſtant faith. Even Cranmer and Ridley, who had been advocates for them, eſpecially the latter, who was the moſt violent perſecutor of Hooper, when they came to be degraded, ſmiled at this ridiculous attire, and declared they had long ſince laid aſide all regard to that pageantry. Ridley wrote a letter to Hooper when in priſon, and calls him his dear brother, and fellow-elder in Chriſt; and deſires a mutual forgiveneſs and reconciliation.

Much as theſe eminent reformers are to be revered, every conſiſtent proteſtant muſt condemn their perſecuting ſpirit. Some in this reign, contrary to the judgment of the pious king, but owing to the warmth of

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the biſhops, were burnt for what they called hereſy. The papiſts ſaid upon this, that the reformed only complained of perſecution when they were the ſufferers. It ſhould be remembered however, that they learnt theſe evil principles, in a church which delights in blood; popery is chargable with their great errors on this point. Cranmer and Ridley would in all probability never have been perſecutors had they not once been papiſts.

Their failings however, connvice us how wrong it is to perſiſt in any practices merely becauſe they approved them. We ought to copy the noble example they have ſet us of oppoſing eſtabliſhed errors, and not be content to ſtop where they did, eſpecially ſince themſelves ſaw reaſon to alter their opinions on farther examination, and, as biſhop Burnet ſays, deſigned to procure and act to aboliſh the popiſh garments. But the death of the king, who died at ſixteen years of age, put an end to all their noble deſigns.

Upon the acceſſion of queen Mary, (with great propriety named the bloody) popery again revived, and beſides the ſufferings which the reformers underwent, from impriſonments, ſcourgings, and other cruel treatment, about three hundred periſhed in the flames in the ſpace of four years, amongſt whom there were five biſhops, perſons of all ages and conditions, and their cruelty went ſo far as to burn two boys and two infants. Bonner, biſhop of London, acted the greateſt piece of cruelty, England ever ſaw, eleven men and two women being burnt by his command in one fire at Stratford near London.

Great numbers of the reformers fled into baniſhment, and were entertained by the reformed ſtates of Germany, Switzerland and Geneva, with great humanity, having churches appointed them for public worſhip. Some of the exiles were for uſing the liturgy of king Edward VI. but others thinking themſelves now at liberty, reſolved to ſhake of the remainders of antichriſt, and to copy after the purer forms of the churches amongſt whom they lived. Accordingly the congregation at Franckfort began by the deſire of the magiſtrates upon the Geneva model, with an additional prayer for the afflicted ſtate of the church of England at that time. But when Dr. Cox, afterwards biſhop

of

of Ely, came with a freſh detachment from England, who were bent on keeping to the old form, to which the others not readily yielding, he rudely interrupted the divine ſervice by anſwering aloud after the miniſter, which occaſioned ſuch a diſturbance and diviſion as could never be healed. One half of the congregation removed to Geneva, and Dr. Cox * and his friends kept poſſeſſion of the church at Franckfort, till there aroſe ſuch quarrels and confuſions amongſt themſelves, as made them a reproach to the ſtrangers amongſt whom they dwelt. Thus was the firſt diviſion cauſed by the obſtinacy of a few perſons, who acted contrary to the judgment of the reformers abroad whom they conſulted. Theſe were for laying aſide every remainder of ſuperſtition, and not adhering to forms becauſe they had been once eſtabliſhed. However, by this means a peaceable church was diſturbed by men who could no more agree amongſt themſelves than with others, which will always be the caſe when human inventions are impoſed, the grand cauſe of ſtrife and diviſion.

Queen Elizabeth's acceſſion to the crown gave new life to the reformation: As ſoon as it was known beyond ſea, moſt of the exiles returned home; but the public religion continued for a while in the ſame poſture the queen found it. It was however well known, that ſhe was a favourer of the reformation, but her preſent circumſtances required caution. When the exiles were preparing to return home, conciliatory letters paſſed between them, and thoſe who were inclined to what ſoon after was called Puritaniſm, prayed the others to unite, in endeavouring to obtain ſuch a form of worſhip, as they had ſeen practiſed in the beſt reformed churches. The others replied it would not be in their power to appoint ceremonies, but they were determined to ſubmit in things indifferent; however they would join in petitioning the queen that nothing burdenſome ſhould be impoſed. The foreign divines ſtrongly adviſed them, to clear the church of all the relics and ſuperſtitions of popery at once, for if the

* Notwithſtanding Dr. Cox's zeal for the liturgy he always oppoſed images, crucifixes, and lights in the churches, being very averſe to popiſh innovations.

outward

outward face of religion remained mixed, uncertain and doubtful, ſuch things would be obtruded as would make returning back to the old ſuperſtitions very eaſy. And under a pretence to avoid giving offence, many things would be ſuffered under a colour of continuing but for a little while, and yet afterwards it would be found very difficult to remove them. Theſe ſentiments ſeem to have been dictated with a prophetic ſpirit.

The queen did not at firſt condemn theſe principles, but when her government was ſettled, ſhe roundly declared the ſtandard was fixed, and ſhe would have all her ſubjects conform to it. Rites and ceremonies ſhe thought were indifferent, and thoſe of the church of Rome preferable to others, becauſe they were venerable and pompous, and the people had been uſed to them. (The people however in general were ſo averſe to the popiſh garments, hating every thing which belonged to thoſe who had exerciſed ſuch cruelties amongſt them, that they would even inſult ſuch of the clergy as wore them in the ſtreets). Her majeſty was therefore deſirous of retaining images in churches, crucifixes, and croſſes, (theſe however were afterwards removed) muſic and the old garments. When king Edward's liturgy was reviewed, nothing was altered to pleaſe the Puritans, though paſſages were ſtruck out to pleaſe the papiſts; this petition in particular, "from the tyranny of the biſhop of Rome, and all his deteſtable enormities, good Lord deliver us."

The preſent clergy violently oppoſed the reformation though not above three hundred quitted their preferments. The biſhops and higher clergy had changed ſo often, that they were aſhamed of repeating it, and ſo held in a body to diſtreſs the reformation. Fourteen biſhops were deprived for refuſing the oath of ſupremacy. Some of the reformed exiles were offered the vacant biſhoprics, but refuſed them on account of the habits and ceremonies. Many that accepted did it with trembling, in hopes by their intereſt with the queen to obtain an amendment in the conſtitution of the church. Biſhop Burnet tells us in his travels, that when he was at Zurich he ſaw a vaſt collection of letters, many of them from theſe complying biſhops, lamenting the

the queen's fixedneſs to them, hoping the laws relating to them would be repealed if the popiſh party did not hinder it; and Grindal, afterwards archbiſhop of Canterbury, ſaid, that all the biſhops who had been beyond ſea, had, at their return, dealt with the queen to let the matter of habits fall. There is a letter of that great man biſhop Jewel, in which he calls theſe veſtments "the relics of the Amorites, and wiſhes they were extirpated to the deepeſt roots, and confeſſed, that all things were ſo looſe and uncertain here, that he did not know whether he ſhould not be obliged to go back to Zurich." Had they united counſels and ſtood by one another, they might have removed thoſe grievances which ſat ſo heavy on many: But though at firſt they were moderate and made a humble appearance, not being uſed to grandeur, yet as they grew rich they raiſed their deportment, and many of them afterwards cruelly lorded it over their brethren.

The chief principles of the Puritans were as follows: They were no enemies to the name or function of a biſhop, provided he was only a ſtated preſident of the college of preſbyters in his dioceſe, and managed the affairs of it with their direction and aſſiſtance. They did not object againſt preſcribed forms of prayer, provided the miniſter was permitted to alter or vary ſome expreſſions, and uſe a prayer of his own conception before and after ſermon. Nor had they an averſion to ſuch decent and diſtinct habits for the clergy as were not derived from popery; to that they were determined enemies, and to every thing that had a tendency to it. They were ſober in their deportment, ſtrict obſervers of the Lord's day, Calviniſtical in their principles, warm and affectionate preachers. There were alſo a conſiderable number diſtinguiſhed by the name of Brownifts, (from one Mr. Brown, a hot fiery young man, who afterwards conformed to the church, lived a wretched life and died in a gaol to which he was committed for ſtriking a conſtable) who were rigid and narrow in points of diſcipline, and would not allow the church of England to be a true church. They thought every church ought to be confined within the limits of a ſingle congregation, over which no others had any authority,

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(in this all the diſſenters of the preſent age ſeem to agree with them) and did not allow the prieſthood to be a diſtinct order, but that as the vote of the brotherhood gave him authority to preach and adminiſter the ſacraments, ſo that might deprive him of it. Their great fault was uncharitableneſs, inſomuch that they would not communicate or even join in prayer with the church of England, or any of the reformed, declaring they were not the churches of Chriſt, as they had departed from the ſimplicity of the goſpel. The ſevere treatment thoſe met with who would not comply with the injunctions of the biſhops, ſeems to have drove them to ſuch extremes. Perſecution will never make converts, though it may hypocrites, and generally tends to drive men from the church inſtead of reconciling them to it.

The Puritans allowed lay communion, but by the act of uniformity many excellent miniſters were ſilenced, and ſuffered great hardſhips through the whole of that long reign; and thoſe who eſpouſed their ſentiments would privately attend on their miniſtrations. They met in the ſame places where the proteſtants did in queen Mary's reign. Many of the moſt eminent preachers ſided with them, particularly Father Miles Coverdale, who in the reign of Edward VI. was biſhop of Exeter, and one of the firſt after Wickliffe who tranſlated the Bible into Engliſh, (for which good work every Chriſtian will love him) in the reign of queen Mary he ſcarce eſcaped the fire, but was nevertheleſs neglected in the preſent reign, becauſe he could not comply with the ceremonies and habits, At length he got a ſmall living in the city, and the habits were diſpenſed with; vaſt crouds of people attended him, but refuſing to wear the habits, in about two years time he was turned out from hence. The people then ſent to his houſe on Saturday, to know where he would preach the next day, but he durſt not inform them of this for fear of offending his ſuperiors, ſo that his grey hairs were brought down with ſorrow to the grave, at the age of eighty-one. Vaſt numbers attended the funeral of this pious and excellent ſufferer.

The other was the Rev. Mr. Fox, author of the book of martyrs, a valuable and moſt laborious work which gave the deepeſt wound to popery it had ever received. He was much eſteemed by the queen, and might have had great preferment; but was unwilling to ſubſcribe the canons, and diſliked ſome of the ceremonies, but being in extreme poverty and want, by the intereſt of ſome great friend he obtained a prebend of Sarum, which he held to his death, but not without ſome trouble. Archbiſhop Parker ſummoned him to ſubſcribe, upon which the venerable old man producing the New Teſtament, "to this (ſays he) I will ſubſcribe." And when a ſubſcription to the canons was required of him, he refuſed, ſaying, "I have nothing in the church, ſave a prebend at Saliſbury, and much good may it do you, if you will take it away from me." This however they were aſhamed to do.

Many were deprived on the like accounts, and as great numbers of the common people abhorred the habits as much as the miniſters, they were at a loſs where to hear, but many after waiting to ſee if the queen would have compaſſion on them, having no hopes of redreſs, had a ſolemn conſultation, in which, after prayer and a ſerious debate about the lawfulneſs and neceſſity of ſeparating from the eſtabliſhed church, they agreed. That ſince they could not have the word of God preached, nor the ſacraments adminiſtered, without idolatrous gear, they ſhould aſſemble as they had opportunity in private houſes or elſewhere, to worſhip God according to their conſciences. And ſince they were cut off from the church, to ſet up what they thought the pureſt worſhip, they laid aſide the Common Prayer and ſervice of the church. If there was any ſchiſm in this, it was owing to the impoſing temper of the clergy, who though they acknowledged theſe things to be indifferent, would nevertheleſs force them upon others full as learned, pious, and worthy as themſelves, who really ſcrupled them as diſhonourable to Chriſt and hurtful to religion. Never was preaching more wanted, and yet the moſt able men were ſilenced, becauſe they could not comply with the injunctions of the biſhops.

In

In the large and populous town of Northampton, there had not been a preacher for a conſiderable time, though the people applied to their biſhop by the moſt humble ſupplications. In a petition from the county of Cornwall, it is ſaid, "We are ninety thouſand ſouls ready to periſh for want of the word of God, and though we have a hundred and ſixty churches, to the maintenance of which there is yearly allowed 9200l. (on an average 57l. per ann. each, equal at leaſt to 200l. per ann. now) the greateſt part of them are ſupplied by men who are guilty of the groſſeſt ſins, fornicators, adulterers, felons, bearing the marks in their hands of the ſaid offences; drunkards, gameſters on the Sabbath day, many who preach but once a quarter. We have ſome miniſters who labour faithfully in the Lord's huſbandry; but theſe men are not ſuffered to attend their callings, becauſe the mouths of papiſts, infidels, and filthy livers, are open againſt them, and the ears of thoſe who are called lords over them, are ſooner open to ſuch accuſers than to their defences. Nor is it ſafe for us to go and hear them, for though our own fountains are dried up, yet if we ſeek for the waters of life elſewhere, we are cited into the ſpiritual courts, reviled, and threatened with excommunication. Therefore from far we come, beſeeching this honourable houſe to diſpoſſeſs theſe dumb dogs, and appoint them faithful miniſters who might preach the word without moleſtation from any eccleſiaſtical commiſſioners."

Even the city of London petitioned in the ſame manner, repreſenting that half of their churches were unſupplied with preaching miniſters, in the other half partly by reaſon of non-reſidents, which were many, partly through the mean qualifications of others there is ſcarce a tenth man who makes conſcience to wait upon his charge, whereby the Lord's Sabbath is oftentimes wholly neglected, for the moſt part miſerably mangled, and darkneſs coming in like an armed man. Upon a diligent ſurvey made in the 28th year of the queen's reign, it appeared that there were but two thouſand preachers to ſerve ten thouſand pariſhes, ſo that there were eight thouſand churches without preaching miniſters. In ſome places if perſons would hear a

 ſermon,

ſermon, they muſt go five, twelve, yea, in ſome counties, twenty miles; and at the ſame time be fined twelve-pence a Sabbath for being abſent from their own pariſh churches, though it could be proved they were hearing a ſermon elſewhere becauſe they had none at home. The ground of this ſcarcity was no other than the ſeverity of the high commiſſion, and the narrow terms of conformity. Moſt of the old incumbents were diſguiſed papiſts, fitter to ſport with the timbrel and harp than to take into their hands the book of God; and yet there was a riſing generation of valuable preachers ready for the miniſtry, if they might have been encouraged; for in a ſupplication of ſome of the ſtudents of Cambridge to the parliament about this time, they acknowledge, "That there were plenty of able and well-furniſhed men among them, but unlearned men, nay the ſcum of the people were preferred before them, they were obliged to ſtand idle, being urged with ſubſcriptions to approve the Romiſh hierarchy, and all the effects of that government to be agreeable to the word of God, which, with no ſafety or conſcience, we can accord unto. They then offer an amicable conference or diſputation, as the queen and parliament ſhall agree, to put an end to theſe differences, but the queen and the biſhops were againſt it."

What a miſerable ſtate of things was this when many hundreds of pious, conſcientious miniſters were ſhut out of the church, and ſtarving with their families for want of employment, when the people applied ſo earneſtly for their aſſiſtance, and yet idle, wicked men were preferred before them, merely becauſe they complied with ſome terms, (and with what terms will not bad men comply) which the diligent and worthy could not! Loud were the cries of theſe poor ſufferers to heaven for mercy, as well as to their ſuperiors on earth. But, notwithſtanding their piety, and their numbers, notwithſtanding the great want of their labours, notwithſtanding their petitions were ſigned by the people, by the juſtices of peace, and the gentlemen in ſeveral counties, by the lord-mayor and aldermen of London, by many of the comforming clergy, by the privy council, and by divers of the nobility, nothing could move the biſhops.

biſhops. The houſe of commons ſeemed reſolved to relieve the Puritans and prepared bills for that purpoſe. This alarmed the biſhops, and gave the queen ſuch offence, that ſhe ſent a moſt arbitrary meſſage to the houſe, ordering that no bills concerning religion, ſhould be received before they had been firſt conſidered and liked by the clergy in convocation*. This was a blow at the very root of the freedom of parliaments, and it awakened a brave ſpirit of liberty amongſt ſome of the members. That great patriot Sir Peter Wentworth, ſpoke on this occaſion, and obſerved "That there was but ſmall hopes of a reformation; baniſhing the pope and reforming true religion, had its beginning from this houſe, but not from the biſhops; few laws for religion had their foundation from them; and I do ſurely think, ſays he, before God I ſpeak it, that the biſhops were the cauſe of this doleful meſſage." But for this ſpeech Sir Peter was ſent to the Tower. Some of the Puritans at length through frailty were overcome and ſubmitted, but moſt of them caſt themſelves and their families upon the providence of God. They were treated with further ſeverities being kept in noiſome gaols; ſome of them had not a penny when they were ſent to priſon, nor any thing to procure a maintenance for themſelves or families, by which means many of them periſhed in priſon, and their children were ſtarved. Sixty and upwards had been ſhut up in the priſons of London, from all comfort, from their trades, (the laity ſtanding up firm in defence of the truth) from their families, many of them two years and half in great penury and noiſomeneſs of the priſon; ſome caſt in dungeons and irons, ſome in hunger and famine, never called to a trial, but debarred from a lawful audience before the magiſtrate, (a privilege which

* It was obſerved, with regard to the late petition to parliament for aboliſhing ſubſcriptions, that it ſhould have been addreſſed to the convocation; pity but what Sir Peter Wentworth's ſpeech had been recollected. Nothing is more certain, than that the clergy in general have oppoſed all reformation, though ſome individuals have ſuffered nobly in the cauſe of truth. Our age is ſo polite however, that it is thought illiberal to inſinuate this; would to God this age gave no reaſon for it, but it is a truth old as Chriſtianity, and is daily confirmed.

murderers may claim) daily defamed and falſely accuſed by pamphlets diſperſed abroad to calumniate and miſrepreſent them, but what moſt nearly concerned them, as indeed it muſt perſons of ſuch true piety, they were kept from all ſpiritual comfort by doctrine, prayer, or mutual conference, and thus did many of them end their lives. Some were publicly put to death at Tyburn, charged indeed with writing books againſt the queen and government, but this accuſation was falſe, no ſubjects were more loyal, and they prayed ſo earneſtly at their death for her long and proſperous reign, that her majeſty repented having yielded. Indeed ſhe was not properly acquainted with their caſe, for when they had drawn up a petition to her, praying deliverance from their miſeries, archbiſhop Whitgift intercepted the paper. But they had wrote againſt the church, and it was his artful contrivance to throw off the odium of their death from * himſelf to the civil magiſtrate, this was true popiſh craft. Indeed Whitgift himſelf might probably have been a papiſt in diſguiſe; certain it is that he had been a papiſt in queen Mary's time, by which means he kept his place in the univerſity, no one however can doubt but that to the end of his life he had the true ſpirit of Rome.

It muſt be acknowledged that ſome of the Puritans were too warm and violent, but oppreſſion will make a wiſe man mad; and when we conſider the humble manner in which they at firſt petitioned, and the cruel treatment they had in return, it is no wonder ſome warm ſpirits were impatient; ſcurrilous pamphlets were written and diſperſed by ſome of them, when their requeſts had been rejected, which were anſwered by others juſt as bad, on the biſhop's ſide. By far the greateſt part however, notwithſtanding their ſufferings, were peaceable, humble, quiet men †.

Elizabeth's

* This is the practice of the inquiſition abroad, and hath been alledged in defence of the clergy here, more than once; they have been the means of of procuring perſecuting laws, and then thrown the blame on the parliament.

† The great Sir Francis Walſingham wrote a letter much to their prejudice, but he was a courtier, and willing to vindicate his royal

Elizabeth's was a glorious reign, and ſhe was the chief ſupport of the proteſtant religion, yet her perſecuting and arbitrary ſpirit will always reflect diſhonour on her memory. It was a cuſtom amongſt the miniſters who were diſpoſed to improve in knowledge and inſtruct the people to have what they called propheſyings in the market town, where they interpreted texts of ſcripture greatly to their own and the people's improvement; but the queen being informed they were nurſeries of Puritaniſm, and tended to promote alterations in the government of the church, quickly put them down. Archbiſhop Grindal, and many of the biſhops, declared, that by theſe exerciſes the clergy were much improved in ſcripture knowledge, and that nothing had beat down popery like them, but ſhe ſuſpended the honeſt archbiſhop for defending, and would by no means ſuffer them; ſhe ſaid it was good for the church to have but few preachers, three or four in a county being ſufficient. Her majeſty would rule, and was afraid as ſhe ſaid, that by hearing ſermons, the people would become too knowing, and learn to diſpute her authority. The cry for liberty is very great in our days, nothing however ſeems to have a worſe aſpect on our civil rights, than the neglect of public worſhip, which every day grows more faſhionable, though it muſt make the generality ignorant, careleſs, and at length enſlave the whole. The prophanation of the Sabbath, and neglect of public worſhip, as is ſubverſive of religion and morality, ſo it is highly prejudicial in a civil and political view. Thoſe who deſire to enſlave us, cannot take a better method than by bringing this into contempt, conſequently thoſe are really the beſt patriots who encourage the obſervance of it. I cannot enlarge here, this however is certain, that ſince preaching has been moſt practiſed, we have become better acquainted with, and more tenacious of our liberties and civil rights.

royal miſtreſs. The moſt violent Puritan was one who wrote under the name of Martin Man-prelate, who was much cenſured by his own party; two or three warm ſpirits often do hurt to a whole body.

All poſſible care was therefore taken that there ſhould be little preaching or any thing like it. Sundry well-diſpoſed people, uſed to meet together after they had done work, to read the ſcriptures, and confirm one another in the Chriſtian faith and practice. They declared they did not ſeparate from the church, but would be glad to learn their duty to God, their prince, their families, and neighbours; and on holidays, &c. after they had done their buſineſs, to ſpend that time in a ſober reading of the ſcriptures, which they heretofore ſpent at the alehouſe in cards, dice, and other vain paſtimes. They were however obliged to deſiſt, it being thought better that they ſhould be drinking at an alehouſe than in theſe aſſemblies.

Such was the ſtate of religion in this reign, but all queen Elizabeth's ſubjects diſcovered a high veneration for her perſon. She countenanced all the engines of perſecution, and ſtretched her prerogative beyond all law; yet, nevertheleſs, was a wiſe and politic princeſs, delivered the kingdom from great difficulties, and will be admired by all poſterity.

CHAP. II.

JAMES I. had been bred in the diſcipline of the church of Scotland, and the biſhops had great apprehenſions from this Scots miſt. (as one of them called him) fearing their power would be abridged: The Puritans hoped their ſufferings would be removed, and ſome alterations made in their favour. For, he had in a moſt ſolemn manner declared, that he believed the church of Scotland to be the pureſt church in the world, and ſpoke in a ſlighting manner of the church of England, calling the Common Prayer an evil maſs ſaid in Engliſh. In his ſpeech to the parliament of Scotland he declared, he would not bring in papiſtical or Engliſh biſhops; nay, when he took leave of Scotland, he told them that he left both church and ſtate in ſuch a manner as he did not intend to alter any way; and charged all the miniſters, nobility, and gentry, to maintain it in the ſame purity. But it ſeemed to have been the

firſt article of the kings, of the Stuart name, that oaths and promiſes were not binding, for ſo far was he from endeavouring a reform in England, that contrary to the ſenſe of the Scots nation, the moſt ſolemn oaths at his coronation, and repeated voluntary promiſes, he impoſed biſhops upon them.

He altered his mind ſoon after he came to England; he loved flattery, and the biſhops gave him enough of it. His majeſty ſided with them againſt the Puritans, and they praiſed his wiſdom and learning beyond meaſure, calling him the Solomon of the age. Bancroft, biſhop of London, fell upon his knees, and ſaid, "I proteſt my heart melteth for joy that Almighty God of his ſingular mercy, hath given us ſuch a king, as ſince Chriſt's time has not been." And archbiſhop Whitgift was ſo tranſported with him, that he ſaid, "Undoubtedly your majeſty ſpeaks by the ſpecial aſſiſtance of God's ſpirit." Such ſtuff pleaſed James; and he congratulated himſelf, that "He was now come into the promiſed land; that he ſat among grave and reverend men, and was not a king as formerly without ſtate, nor in a place where beardleſs boys would brave him to his face *." Thus did the biſhops obtain his favour by flattery, and kept it by ſupporting him in the moſt illegal actions, which increaſing in the reign of his ſon, broke out into a flame which deſtroyed both church and ſtate.

A conference was held at Hampton-Court, betwixt the biſhops and the Puritans before the king. There were nine biſhops, and eight other dignitaries, on the ſide of the church; for the puritans there were only four miniſters. The puritans were refuted not by arguments, for Dr. Raynold, one of their number, was the oracle of his time, for acquaintance with eccleſiaſtical

* The Puritan party in Scotland carried it with a high hand, and kept James pretty much in ſubjection, who was but an infant when his unfortunate mother (Mary) was for her crimes driven from her kingdom. Neither party at that time entered thoroughly into the principles of liberty, only the Puritans were deſirous of conforming entirely to what they thought the ſenſe of ſcripture; the churchmen loved antiquity, fathers, and human authority.

hiſtory, councils, and fathers; but they were inſulted, ridiculed, and laughed to ſcorn without wit or good manners. The king would hear the biſhops with attention, but when the Puritans ſpoke, he would interrupt them with revilings, the biſhops would behave in the ſame manner, and when Dr. Raynold was going to ſay it was too much work for a biſhop ——, Bancroft fell upon his kees, and begged his majeſty with great earneſtneſs to ſtop the doctor's mouth. The king perceiving him to be in a great heat, deſired him either to let the doctor proceed or anſwer his objections, which latter he attempted to do. This mock conference ſerved for James to diſplay his pedantry, and the courtiers to exercise their little wit, on the poor Puritans, but all things had been concluded upon by the king and biſhops before hand, ſo that the puritans were only brought upon the ſtage to be made a ſpectacle to their enemies, and the laſt day were called in not to diſpute, but to hear the few alterations or explanations in the Common Prayer book, which were intended to be made. The miniſters fell on their knees to beg, that the ſurplice and croſs might not be urged on ſome godly miniſters, which requeſt the king refuſed with a ſtern countenance, and threatened if they were obſtinate after ſome time, he would have them enforced to conformity. His majeſty made himſelf both party and judge, and I approve or I diſſent from him was thought ſufficient to anſwer all the arguments of the puritans. No wonder that with ſuch treatment they failed making the beſt of their cauſe.

Dr. Whitgift dying, who was a learned man, but ſevere perſecutor of the Puritans, he was ſucceeded in the ſee of Canterbury by Bancroft (whom we have been ſpeaking of) a man of a rough temper, covetous, ill-natured, and an enemy to the laws and conſtitutions of his country. He revived the perſecution againſt the puritans with great cruelty, enforcing the ſtrict obſervance of the feſtivals of the church, and reviving the uſe of copes, ſurplices, caps, and hoods, and obliging them to declare they did willingly and from the heart believe that the book of Common Prayer, and of the ordination of prieſts and deacons, contained nothing contrary to the word of God, with ſome other matters.

By

By theſe ſeverities above three hundred miniſters were ſilenced or deprived, ſome of them were excommunicated or caſt into priſon, others were forced to leave their native country and their ſubſiſtence, to go into baniſhment, which they preferred before violating their conſciences. Thoſe who ſeemed inclined to ſeperate from the church were treated with the greateſt rigour. A gentleman and two miniſters of Yarmouth, were charged with keeping a conventicle, becauſe on the Lord's day after ſermon, they repeated the heads of the ſermon preached that day in the church. Two of them were ſhut up in priſon, and confined a long time without being admitted to bail; and being brought to their trial, Mr. Fuller of Gray's-Inn, a man of learning, undertaking to be their counſel, moved that the priſoners ought to be diſcharged, becauſe the high commiſſioners were not empowered by law to impriſon, fine, or adminiſter the oath *ex officio* to any of his majeſty's ſubjects. (This was an oath tendered to perſons, obliging them to anſwer all ſuch queſtions as ſhould be put to them, by which means, contrary to law and juſtice, they were forced to turn their own accuſers.) This alarmed that tyranical court, and enraged Bancroft, who told the king, that Mr. Fuller was the champion of the nonconformiſts, and ought to be made an example of to terrify others. Accordingly, he was cloſely impriſoned, from whence neither the interceſſions of his friends, nor his own moſt humble petitions could obtain his releaſe to the day of his death. How terrible theſe times, when men for pretended offences, were thus illegally dealt with, and thoſe proſecuted for untaking their cauſe, whoſe buſineſs it was, with ſuch unrelenting cruelty!

Thoſe high abuſes of church power, obliged many learned miniſters and their followers, to leave the kingdom, and retire to Holland, where churches were erected after the preſbyterian model. Others fled to America, and ſuffered incredible hardſhips, ſo that of a hundred and twenty that ſet out together for New England, through want of neceſſaries, the fatigues of the voyage, and the ſeverities of the weather, their cottages

cottages not being ſufficient to keep them warm, having no phyſic nor wholeſome food, within two or three months half of the company died, and not above ſix or ſeven at a time through ſickneſs, were able to help the reſt. As the ſpring came on the remainder recovered ſtrength, and having received freſh ſupplies from their friends in England, they maintained their ſtation, and laid the foundation of one of the nobleſt ſettlements in America. Several families croſſed the ocean to Virginia, and invited their friends to come to them, but Bancroft being informed that great numbers were embarked, obtained a proclamation forbidding any of his majeſty's ſubjects to tranſpant themſelves to Virginia. This was a cruelty worthy of the inquiſition, nor was it ever imitated in this county but by archbiſhop Laud. It required a mindutterly void of humanity to diſtreſs conſcientious men by theſe ſevere perſecutions, but to hinder them when flying both from ſuffering and offending was infernal malice.

In the year 1618, in order to ſtop the growth of Puritaniſm, and ſilence the objections of papiſts againſt the ſtrictneſs of the reformed religion, (an argument which one would think could only weigh with the vileſt ſort) his majeſty publiſhed a declaration to encourage recreations and ſports on the Lord's-day after ſervice, ſuch as Morrice-dances, Revels, May-games, Whitſun-ales, Wakes, Leapings, Vaultings, ſetting up May-poles in the church-yards, and near the church. This declaration was ordered to be read in Lancaſhire which abounded with papiſts, and was to have been read in all the pariſh churches in England, but the pious Dr. Abbot, who ſucceeded Bancroft in the archbiſhopric, warmly oppoſed it, and forbid it to be read in his pariſh church at Croydon. Certainly this muſt have been a grief to all ſober perſons, ſince the neglect of the Sabbath ruins the morals of the common people, and lets in iniquity like a flood. It was ordered, that thoſe who did not attend divine ſervice, ſhould not be preſent at theſe diverſions, but ſurely the buſineſs of religion is not finiſhed as ſoon as we leave the church; a quick return to buſineſs or diverſions, will choak the word; it muſt be ſeriouſly recollected to bring forth fruit.

James

James died 1624. 'Tis hard to form any judgment of his religion; one while he was a Puritan, then a zealous churchman; at firſt a Calviniſt, afterwards an Arminian, and at laſt almoſt, if not an entire papiſt; he ſaid he ſhould be content to meet the church of Rome half way. In Scotland he appeared ſober, chaſte, and even learned, but in England his luxury was exceſſive, his language obſene, his actions indecent. He was a profane ſwearer, and would be often drunk, but when he came to himſelf, would weep like a child, and ſay, he hoped God would not impute his infirmities to him. He was certainly the meaneſt prince that ever ſat upon the Britiſh throne; and England in his reign was the ſcorn and contempt of all its neighbours. His baſe flatterers called him the Solomon of the age, but his memory is now deſpiſed.

Mr. Thomas Cartwright, the chief of the Puritans, died in his reign. When at the univerſity he never ſlept above five hours in a night. In queen Mary's reign, he became a lawyer's clerk; but upon the acceſſion of queen Elizabeth reſumed his divinity ſtudies, and was ſo popular a preacher, that when his turn came at St. Mary's in Cambridge, the ſexton was obliged to take down the windows. Venturing to ſhew the defects of the church he was expelled the univerſity, and travelled beyond ſea, but returned at the earneſt requeſt of Mr. Fox and many other divines. Writing in defence of the Puritans, he was anſwered by Whitgift. The diſpute was long and ſharp; Cartwright affirmed, that the ſcriptures were the only ſtandards of diſcipline and government, as well as doctrine: Whitgift maintained, that though the ſcriptures was a perfect rule, they were not a ſtandard of church government, which might be varied and altered. The latter was rewarded with an archbiſhopric, the former with bonds and impriſonment; but at laſt the earl of Leiceſter, on account of his great worth, made him governor of his hoſpital in Warwick, where he died, aged ſixty-eight. In his old age he was ſo troubled with the ſtone and gout, by lying in the priſons, that he was obliged to ſtudy on his knees. A few hours before he died he was two

hours

hours in private prayer. Good Mr. Dod (ſo famous for his ſayings) preached his funeral ſermon.

Charles I. having married a papiſt, who had a great aſcendency over him, and who was at the ſame time much bigotted to her religion, it was no wonder that the papiſt were connived at and encouraged. The king was without doubt a proteſtant, yet he ſeemed to be very complaiſant to the church of Rome, for when in Spain he received a letter from the pope, who endeavoured to make him a convert, Charles anſwered him in a very obliging manner, giving him the title of *Moſt Holy Father*, and encouraged him to expect, that when he came to the crown there ſhould be but one religion in his dominions, ſeeing (ſays he) that both catholics and proteſtants believe in one Jeſus Chriſt. A fine concluſion!. It is indeed to be wiſhed, that all who believe in one Jeſus Chriſt would unite together in love; but for the ſake of unity muſt we ſacrifice purity, and adopt errors in doctrine and enormities in practice? Unleſs we ſubmit to ſome of theſe, the papiſts will never be reconciled; obedience muſt be paid to the pope, and we muſt come to God by other mediators than the one he has appointed.

Papiſts were promoted at court to places of the higheſt honour and truſt. The pope had a nuncio in England, and the queen an agent at Rome; cardinal Barberini was made protector of the Engliſh nation; and a ſociety was erected under the title of *The Congregation for propagating the Faith*. Richard Smith, titular biſhop of Chalcedon, exerciſed epiſcopal juriſdiction over the Engliſh catholics, by a commiſſion from the pope; he conferred orders, and appeared in Lancaſhire with the mitre and croſier; the pope's legate gained over ſeveral of the gentry, and attempted the king himſelf by preſents of little popiſh toys and pictures, with which it is ſaid his majeſty was wonderfully delighted, ſeveral of their military men were put into commiſſion, and great numbers were liſted in his majeſty's armies againſt the Scots. So that as Lord Clarendon ſays, "the papiſts enjoyed a great calm, being abſolved from the ſevereſt parts of the law, and diſpenſed with for the gentleſt."

Auricular

Auricular confeſſion, penance, altar worſhip, ſaint worſhip, the ſubſtantial corporal preſence of Chriſt in the ſacrament, and the maſs were defended by the eſtabliſhed clergy. Books maintaining popiſh errors were licenſed and publicly ſold, when thoſe of the moſt reſolved proteſtants were ſuppreſſed*. Archbiſhop Laud had the daring preſumption to make alterations in the Common Prayer book, and impoſe theſe alterations on the whole body of the clergy, ſtriking out ſome ſentences which diſpleaſed the papiſts, and inſerting ſuch as bore hard upon the Puritans; thus did a ſingle clergyman take upon him to alter what had been eſtabliſhed by act of parliament. The church of Rome was acknowledged to be a true church, but the foreign proteſtants were not eſteemed part of the communion of the church of England. Our ambaſſadors, employed in any parts where the reformed religion was exerciſed, uſed to frequent their churches, and hold correſpondence with the moſt eminent members. But Lord Scudamore being ſent ambaſſador to France, was (as Clarendon tells us) inſtructed, if not forbidden, to have any commerce with men of that religion; and ſo inſtead of going to the proteſtant church, furniſhed his chapel after the new faſhion with candles upon the altar, &c. taking care to publiſh on all occaſions, that the church of England looked not on them as a part of their communion; which was likewiſe induſtriouſly diſcourſed at home." The queen of Bohemia, the king's ſiſter, from whom our preſent ſovereign is deſcended, ſolicited the king in a moſt preſſing manner, to admit of a public collection over England for her late ſubjects the poor perſecuted miniſters of the Palatinate, who were baniſhed their country for their religion by the papiſts. The king granted them a brief in which were theſe words:—" Whoſe caſes are the more to be deplored, becauſe this extremity is fallen upon them for their ſincerity and conſtancy in the true religion, which we, together with them, profeſſed;—whereas theſe religious perſons might have enjoyed their

* Such as biſhop Jewel's works, Fox's book of martyrs, and others.

eſtates and fortunes, if with other backſliders in the time of trial, they would have ſubmitted themſelves to the antichriſtian yoke" Laud expunged theſe paſſages, denying they were of the ſame religion with us, becauſe they were Calviniſts, (but how any perſons who read the articles of the church of England can deny their being Calviniſtical is amazing) and their miniſters had not epiſcopal ordination. He objected to the church of Rome's being called an antichriſtian yoke, becauſe it would then follow, that ſhe was in no capacity to convey ſacerdotal powers in ordinations, and conſequently the benefit of the prieſthood, and the force of holy miniſtrations would be loſt in the Engliſh church, for as much as ſhe has no orders but what ſhe derives from the church of Rome. But theſe expreſſions being ſtruck out, the collection did not ſucceed; ſome of the Puritans (divines) then ſigned a private recommendatory letter, deſiring their friends to enlarge their charity, "as to men of the ſame faith and profeſſion with themſelves;" but when Laud heard of it he cited the divines before the high commiſſion, and put a ſtop to the collection. To pleaſe the papiſts, who had drove Frederic king of Bohemia, and elector Palatine of the Rhine, married to this lady Elizabeth, the king's ſiſter out of his dominions, and forced them to fly to Holland in a ſtarving condition, he had the inhumanity, in the collect for the royal family, to have this princeſs and her children left out in the new editions. Had Frederic obtained aſſiſtance from England, being countenanced by all the other proteſtant powers, the balance of power would have turned on that ſide; but, to the wonder of all the world, king James his father, not only neglected to aſſiſt, but even diſcouraged him. By his cowardly behaviour, who would not draw a ſword for the beſt cauſe in the world, the proteſtant cauſe was ruined in Bohemia, and this noble family came to be inſulted by a low-born prieſt. After an exile of twenty-eight years, they were however reſtored to their electorate, and declared preſumptive heirs to the crown of England, of which they took poſſeſſion on the death of queen Anne, to the inexpreſſible joy of all proteſtant diſſenters, (who were hearty

hearty friends to the anceſtors of his preſent majeſty when in the deepeſt diſtreſs) and all that loved religion, liberty, and their country.

It was a very juſt obſervation of a Venetian gentleman, who travelled through England about this time, "That the univerſities, biſhops, and divines of England, daily embraced catholic doctrines, though they profeſſed them not with open mouth." They held that the church of Rome was a true church; that the pope was ſuperior to all biſhops; that to him it pertained to call general councils; that it was lawful to pray for ſouls departed; (ſome biſhops in the reign of Charles II. approved of this, and declared they did it in private) and that altars ought to be erected in all churches; in ſum, they believed all that was taught by the church of Rome, but not by the court of Rome.

But though the papiſts were thus encouraged, the Puritans were treated in a moſt ſevere and cruel manner. To make the difference betwixt them and the church wider, Laud introduced ſeveral pompous innovations tending to popery, which had no foundation in the laws of the realm, or in the canons of the church, any more than in the word of God. He conſecrated churches and chapels with ſuch a variety of ſuperſtitious ceremonies, as Rome could not have outdone. The manner of his conſecrating St. Catherine-Cree church in London, has been particularly recorded; it had been lately repaired, and Laud ſuſpended it from all divine ſervice till it was conſecrated with ſuch fopperies as theſe. Being come to the door, ſome that were prepared cried, with a loud voice, "Open, open the everlaſting doors, that the king of glory may come in;" and preſently the doors being open, Laud, with ſome other principal men, marched in, and immediately falling down upon his knees, with his eyes lifted up and his arms ſpread, uttered theſe words, "This place is holy, this ground is holy; in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, I pronounce it holy." Then he threw up duſt into the air ſeveral times, paraded round the church repeating pſalms; beſtowed about twenty curſes upon all who ſhould afterwards

profane that holy place, and as many bleſſings on thoſe who had any hand in the building, adorning, or giving any thing to it; and at the end of every curſe, bowing towards the eaſt, ſaid, "Let all the people ſay, Amen:" After a ſermon the ſacrament was adminiſtered; in approaching the table he made many lowly bowings, and coming to the ſide of it, where the bread and wine were covered, bowed ſeven times; and after reading many prayers, came near the bread, and gently lifting up the corner of the napkin, when he beheld the bread, laid it down again, flew back a ſtep or two, bowed three ſeveral times towards it, then he drew near again and opened the napkin, and bowed as before. Then he laid his hand on the cup, which was full of wine, with a cover upon it, which he let go again, went back, and bowed thrice towards it: Then he came near again, and lifting up the cover of the cup, looked into it, and ſeeing the wine, he let fall the cover again, retired back, and bowed as before; then after receiving the ſacrament and ſaying many prayers, the ceremony of the conſecration was ended. Sundry other churches and chapels were conſecrated after the ſame manner. This method of conſecrating churches was eſteemed ſuperſtitious and abſurd by our firſt reformers. The ſynagogues of the Jews were not conſecrated in this manner; nor was Solomon's temple conſecrated by a prieſt, but by a king, with ſolemn prayers and ſacrifices according to the word, not ſuperſtitions according to the inventions of men. Our Saviour declares, that WHERESOEVER two or three ſhould be gathered together in his name, he would be in the midſt of them, and that the hour was coming when true worſhippers ſhould worſhip the Father in ſpirit and in truth, but not in one place more than another. How churches are conſecrated in modern times * I know not, theſe ceremonies however

* It muſt be done by a biſhop, ſo that a right reverend, who ſeldom goes to his dioceſe to bleſs the people, is occaſionally forced to go on the ſolemn errand of bleſſing wood and ſtone, or a plat of ground to receive dead carcaſes, ſo that ſuch as do not live a holy life, may at leaſt have the unſpeakable benefit of rotting in holy ground.

have

have no foundation in ſcripture, and are in themſelves highly ridiculous.

Crucifixes, images of the virgin Mary, pictures of ſaints, and other relics of popery, were repaired in thoſe places, where, at the reformation, they had been broken down, and ſet up anew in others. There were conſecrated knives to cut the ſacramental bread, caniſters for wafers lined with cambric lace, and great numbers of lighted candles placed upon the altars on Sundays and ſaints days. The Puritans always averſe to popery, oppoſed theſe ſuperſtitions, and apprehending, images would naturally tend as they always had done to image worſhip; and were directly contrary to the homily againſt the peril of idolatry, (which every clergyman ſubſcribes as containing a good and wholeſome doctrine) they preached and wrote againſt them, and in ſome places removed them, for which they were ſeverely handled by the high commiſſion.

Henry Sherfield, Eſq; recorder of Saliſbury, was tried in the ſtar-chamber for taking down ſome painted glaſs out of one of the windows of St. Edmund's church in Saliſbury, in which were ſeven pictures of God the Father in the form of a little old man, in a blue and red coat with a pouch by his ſide, creating the ſun and moon with a pair of compaſſes, working on the buſineſs of the ſix days creation, and at laſt he ſits in an elbow-chair at reſt. So ſhameful and ſcandalous a repreſentation of the eternal and infinite Jehovah, the inviſible God whom no man hath ſeen or can ſee, muſt have been a great offence to every good man; eſpecially as many ſimple people did reverence to the window, ſaying, the Lord God was there. In vain did Mr. Sherfield plead the impiety of this; in vain did he plead the injunction of queen Elizabeth, which commands that all pictures and monuments of idolatry, ſhould be removed out of churches, that no memory of them might remain in walls, glaſs windows, and elſewhere. Laud ſaid, he did not approve of pictures of things inviſible; but be the paintings better or worſe, he inſiſted ſtrongly that Mr. Sherfield had taken them down in contempt of the epiſcopal authority,

which as it was more than he could poſſibly tell, ſo the church of St. Edmund's being lay fee, was exempt from epiſcopal juriſdiction, and Mr. Sherfield did not take them down before the conſent of the pariſh was obtained, and ſix juſtices of the peace were preſent when he broke them with his ſtaff to have the windows freſh glazed. Laud however moved, that he might be fined a thouſand pounds, and removed from his recorderſhip of the city of Sarum; that he be committed cloſe priſoner to the Fleet till he paid his fine, and then be bound to his good behaviour. To all which the court agreed, except to the fine, which the court reduced to five hundred pounds.

The Rev. Mr. Workman, lecturer of St. Stephen's, Glouceſter, for ſaying in a ſermon, that images were no ornaments to churches, and tended to idolatry according to the homily, was ſuſpended, excommunicated, obliged openly to recant, condemned in coſts of ſuit and impriſoned. Mr. Workman was a divine of great piety, wiſdom, and moderation; in conſideration whereof, and of his numerous family, the city of Glouceſter had given him an annuity of 20l. per annum, under their common ſeal, a little before his troubles: but for this act of charity the mayor, town clerk, and ſeveral of the aldermen, were cited before the high commiſſion, and put to one hundred pounds charges, and the annuity was cancelled. After this Mr. Workman ſet up a little ſchool, of which Laud being informed, prohibited him, as he would anſwer the contrary at his peril. He then fell upon the practice of phyſic, which Laud likewiſe abſolutely forbid; ſo that being deprived of all methods of ſubſiſtence, he fell into a melancholy diſorder and died.

And this prelate was no leſs watchful over the preſs than the pulpit, commanding his chaplains to expunge out of all books that came to be licenced, ſuch paſſages as diſallowed of paintings, carvings, drawings, gildings; erecting, bowing, or praying before images and pictures. Pictures of God, and of the ſaints, which had been taken down at the reformation, were by him ſet up and repaired in his chapel at Lambeth.

But

But it would be endleſs to mention every particular inſtance of cruel oppreſſion exerciſed on ſuch as oppoſed theſe innovations. Above twenty miniſters were fined, cenſured, and put by their livings, for not bowing at the name of Jeſus, or for preaching againſt it. This was enjoined by the eighteenth canon, but never did any one ſuffer for neglecting it, till Laud was at the head of the church (ſee on this ſuperſtitious ceremony, Serious Addreſs, p. 22.) The communion table was uſually placed in the middle of the chancel, or in any convenient part of the church, and the people received round it, or in their ſeveral places there about; but now all communion tables were ordered to be fixed under the Eaſt wall of the chancel, with the ends North and South in form of an altar; they were to be raiſed two or three ſteps above the floor, and encompaſſed with rails. Laud ordered his vicar-general to ſee this alteration made in all the churches and chapels of his province, to accompliſh which, it was neceſſary to take down the galleries in ſome churches, and to remove ancient monuments. The latter was reſented by many conſiderable families as an injury to the dead, and making the neceſſary alterations ſuch an expence to the living, as ſome country pariſhes could not bear; but yet thoſe who refuſed to pay the rates directed by the archbiſhop for this purpoſe were fined contrary to law.

The church-wardens of Beckington in Somerſetſhire, were excommunicated by their biſhop, for refuſing to remove the communion table from the middle of the chancel to the Eaſt end, and not pulling down the ſeats to make room for it. The table had ſtood time out of mind where it did; the ground on which it was placed was raiſed a foot, and encloſed with a decent wainſcot border, and none went within it but the miniſter and ſuch as he required. This plea not availing, they appealed to the arches and at laſt to the king; but their appeal was rejected. After they had remained excommunicated for a year, they were caſt into the common jail about two years more, and were then obliged to do public penance in the pariſh church of Beckington, and two others; the ſhame of which, it is ſaid,

ſaid, broke their hearts, one of them declaring upon his death bed ſoon after, that the penance and ſubmiſſion ſo much againſt his conſcience, had ſunk his ſpirits, and was one principal cauſe of his death. It is indeed incredible to imagine what a ferment the making this alteration raiſed among the common people all over England. Many miniſters and church-wardens were excommunicated, fined, and obliged to do penance, for neglecting theſe injunctions. Great numbers refuſed to come up to the rails and receive the ſacrament, for which ſome were fined, and others excommunicated, to the number of ſome hundreds, ſays the committee of the houſe of commons at the archbiſhop's trial.

The court clergy were ſtrongly ſuſpected of an inclination towards popery, becauſe of their ſuperſtitious bowing to the altar, not only in time of divine ſervice, but at their going in and out of church. This was a practice unknown to the laity of the church of England before this time, but Laud enjoined it upon them, and recommended it to all the clergy by his example, for when he went in and out of the chapel-royal a line was always made for him to ſee the altar and do reverence towards it.

Whether this bowing to the altar ariſes from a belief of the real preſence of Chriſt in the ſacrament or altar, or from the pagan cuſtom of worſhipping towards the riſing ſun, it is to be ſuppoſed thoſe can beſt tell who continue the practice.

It has been acknowledged, that the zeal of the Puritans was not always well regulated, nor were their miniſters ſo much on their guard in the pulpit or converſation as prudence demanded. But how far prudence is to be carried in ſuch caſes, muſt be left to every man's conſcience, but is not boldneſs and reſolution in a good cauſe, though often named raſhneſs, preferable to that timorouſneſs which, if called prudence by many, ſavours too much of worldly policy, eſpecially in miniſters, who ought always to act as *good ſoldiers* as well as good ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt.

Several of the biſhops in the year 1636, publiſhed their primary articles of viſitation, of which the moſt remarkable

remarkable and curious were Dr. Wren's, biſhop of Norwich. This book contains one hundred and thirty-nine articles, in which were eight hundred and ninety-ſeven queſtions, ſome very inſignificant, others highly ſuperſtitious, and ſeveral impoſſible to be anſwered. Some of them were about the morals of the miniſter, but moſt of them about rites and ceremonies, ſuch as whether the miniſter received the ſacrament kneeling, and made others do it! Whether he wore the ſurplice, uſed the croſs in baptiſm, read the book of ſports in the church! Whether the church-yards were conſecrated, the graves dug Eaſt and Weſt, and the bodies buried with their heads to the Weſt? Whether the pariſhioners at going in and out of church, did reverence towards the chancel, kneeled at confeſſion, ſtood up at the creed, and bowed at the name of Jeſus? With divers articles of the like nature. The weight of theſe enquiries fell chiefly upon the Puritans, for within the compaſs of two years and four months, no leſs than fifty able and pious miniſters were ſuſpended, ſilenced, and otherwiſe cenſured, to the ruin of their whole families, for not obeying one or other of theſe articles. Some of them ſpent their days in ſilence, others went as they had opportunity beyond ſea; but none were releaſed without a promiſe to conform to the biſhops injunctions *editis et edendis*, i. e. already publiſhed, or hereafter to be publiſhed. Hard indeed were theſe terms, for who could tell what ſuch popiſhly-inclined biſhops would hereafter publiſh?

Many of the miniſters who ſcrupled a full conformity, and therefore could not take upon them a cure of ſouls, only preached in the afternoon, being choſen and maintained by the people They were warm and affectionate preachers, and diſtinguiſhed themſelves by a religious obſervation of the Lord's day, by a bold oppoſition to popery, and the new ceremonies, and by an uncommon ſeverity of life. They drew great numbers of people after them, but Laud ſaid they were the moſt dangerous enemies of the ſtate, becauſe by their prayers and ſermons they awakened the people's diſaffection,

affection, and therefore muſt be ſuppreſſed. Certain it is, that they had the proteſtant religion at heart, and did much to fortify their hearers againſt the return of popery: Such conduct was then counted ſeditious, and their expreſſions were ſometimes very warm. Mr. Bernard, lecturer of St. Sepulchre's, London, uſed this expreſſion in his prayer, "Lord open the eyes of the queen's majeſty, that ſhe may ſee Jeſus Chriſt, whom ſhe has pierced with her infidelity, ſuperſtition, and idolatry. Being convened before the high commiſſion, upon his ſubmiſſion he was diſmiſſed. But if his ſpeaking in this manner of the queen was to be blamed, thoſe Puritans who only preached againſt images, pictures, and ſuch like pompous innovations, were moſt unjuſtly perſecuted. Mr. Bernard, in a ſermon preached at Cambridge, ſome time after, having ſpoke ſome offenſive things againſt Arminianiſm and the new ceremonies, was required to make an open recantation of what he had ſaid, which his conſcience not ſuffering him to do, he was ſuſpended, excommunicated, fined one thouſand pounds, condemned in coſts of ſuit, committed to New-priſon, where he lay ſeveral months, being cruelly uſed and almoſt ſtarved, of which he complained to the biſhop in ſeveral letters, but could get no relief unleſs he would recant. Mr. Bernard offered to confeſs his ſorrow and penitence for any overſights or unbecoming expreſſions in his ſermons, but that would not be accepted, ſo that in concluſion he was utterly ruined.

Mr. Peter Smart, prebendary of Durham, and miniſter in that city, preached from theſe words, *I hate all thoſe that love ſuperſtitious vanities, but thy law do I love.* From hence he took occaſion to ſpeak againſt images, &c. for which he was deprived, degraded, excommunicated, fined five hundred pounds, and committed to cloſe impriſonment, where he continued eleven years, till he was releaſed by the long parliament 1640.

Theſe ſevere proceedings brought a great deal of buſineſs into the ſpiritual courts; one or other of the Puritan miniſters was every week ſuſpended or deprived,

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and their families ſent a begging. Laud was at the head of all this miſchief, but the new biſhops, being chiefly of his own chooſing, went into the ſame tract. Pierſe, biſhop of Bath and Wells, ſuppreſſed all lectures in market-towns, and elſewhere throughout his dioceſe. One miniſter was ſuſpended for preaching in the evening, though it was a funeral ſermon. And whereas ſome miniſters uſed to explain the queſtions and anſwers in the catechiſm, and make a ſhort prayer before and after, the biſhop reproved them ſharply for it, ſaying *that was as bad as preaching*; ſome who continued this practice were enjoined public penance.

It ſeems to be a ſtrong proof of thoſe biſhops attachment to popery that they thus oppoſed a preaching miniſtry. Nothing tended ſo much to eſtabliſh Chriſtianity at firſt as preaching, nor had ſo conſiderable a ſhare in reviving and reſtoring it from the corruptions of popery afterwards. "To be fond of hearing many ſermons, and of the frequent reading of the ſcriptures, (ſaid a noted jeſuit) is in truth no ſign of a good catholic, but rather the badge of a heretic." When men grow ignorant of the truth of religion, they may be eaſily deluded by artful prieſts; the firſt reformers therefore were, and all who have a true zeal for the welfare of mankind, will be zealous in promoting what tends to enlarge their underſtandings, the beſt defence againſt error. It is to be feared, that popery increaſes much in our days, but though biſhops have not always had the face, or rather the power to ſuppreſs preaching, they have always diſcountenanced it by ſcarce ever preaching themſelves. Indeed it is ſomewhat remarkable, that the higher a man riſes in the church, the leſs he does, ſo that a preaching biſhop has always been and ſtill continues to be, as ſcarce as a patriotic one.

Laud, and his faction, to crown their noble deeds, at length got the infamous book of ſports to be republiſhed. Complaint was made to the judges in the Weſtern circuit, that great diſorders aroſe from revels and church-ales on the Lord's-day. Judge Richardſon therefore, at the deſire of the juſtices of the peace,

peace, and other gentlemen of the greateſt quality in the county of Somerſet, (who petitioned the king againſt them) ordered them to be ſuppreſſed and puniſhed ſome who did not comply, for this he was ſeverely reprimanded, and to ſupport theſe diſorderly aſſemblies more effectually, king James declaration was revived, and ordered to be read by the miniſter in every pariſh church.

The ſevere preſſing this declaration made ſad havock amongſt the Puritans. Many poor miniſters ſtrained their conſciences to read it, and immediately after read the fourth commandment, ſaying, the firſt was the law of man, the other of God. Great numbers however refuſed to comply, and on this account were driven from their livings, excommunicated, and forced to leave the kingdom. Wren, biſhop of Norwich, ſays, that great numbers in his dioceſe had declined it and were ſuſpended; that ſome had ſince complied, but that ſtill there were thirty who refuſed, and were excommunicated. If there were as many in other dioceſes, the whole would amount to ſeven hundred and eighty. It is ſaid, that but three were ſuſpended in Laud's dioceſe who were ruined, one of them having a wife and ſeven children to provide for. To what this moderation was owing it is hard to gueſs, unleſs he was willing, like ſome other perſecutors, to let the odium fall on others. Sr. Nathaniel Brent, his vicar-general, atteſted upon oath, at Laud's trial, that he gave him a ſpecial charge to convene all miniſters before him, who would not read the book of ſports on the Lord's day, and to ſuſpend them for it, and that he gave particular orders to ſuſpend three. This he did againſt his judgment, for the king's declaration did not oblige the miniſter, any more than ſome other perſon to reading it, nor authorize the biſhops to inflict any puniſhment on the refuſers. The biſhops however took upon them to do this, and many were cenſured by the high commiſſion of which Laud was chief. A miniſter, who preached twice on one of theſe revel-days, was called to account, becauſe his preaching was a hindrance to the revel.

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The Dutch and French churches, which were ten in number, having about five or ſix thouſand communicants, had a charter of privileges granted them by Edward VI. and confirmed five times in the reign of James, and twice in that of Charles himſelf. Laud however ſaid they were a neſt of ſchiſmatics, and therefore ordered that all their children of the ſecond deſcent born in England, ſhould reſort to their pariſh churches. By this means their aſſemblies were diſſolved, their miniſters ſuſpended, and many of their people left the kingdom, eſpecially in the dioceſe of Norwich, where biſhop Wren drove away three thouſand manufacturers in wool, cloth, &c. ſome of whom kept a hundred poor people at work, to the unſpeakable damage of the kingdom. The mayor and corporation of Canterbury aſſured his grace, that above twelve hundred of their poor were maintained by the foreigners, and interceded with the king in their favour; but his majeſty anſwered, "*We muſt believe our archbiſhop of Canterbury*," who uſed their deputies very roughly, telling them it were better to have no foreign churches, than to indulge their nonconformity. Thus will perſecuting bigots ſtarve whole families, deſtroy towns, and ruin trade the chief ſupport of a nation, to ſupport their uſeleſs and impracticable ſchemes of an entire uniformity of opinion and practice, and then after their deaths be canonized for ſaints, and if forſooth they have endowed a college or an hoſpital, be cried up for men of great public ſpirit, when their pride and vanity are the prevailing motives. One ſober, honeſt manufacturer, who keeps twenty poor conſtantly at work, is of more real ſervice to the community, than he who lays out thouſands in merely beautifying churches, or enriching colleges: Laud and his creatures have been much cried up for the latter, whilſt the irreparable loſs the nation ſuffered, by their diſturbing honeſt and induſtrious tradeſmen, has been eſteemed of little moment by their panegyriſts. Our archbiſhop extended his iron hand to Scotland, and was zealous for introducing the Engliſh liturgy and ceremonies there, to the great diſguſt of that people, who roſe up as one man againſt it;

and he even attempted bringing the churches of the factors in Holland under the ſame diſcipline, but here he was diſappointed.

Laud, one would think, wanted to be a pope, for he ſuffered the univerſities to give him ſuch titles as the pope claimed, theſe for inſtance, *your holineſs*, *moſt holy father*; full of the Holy Ghoſt; chief-prieſt; the beſt and greateſt in the earth. Agreeably to this, he aſſumed to himſelf the title of patriarch, or pope of Great Britain; (*Alterius Orbis Papa*, a title which one of the pope's gave to our archbiſhop of Canterbury) which gave the Romaniſts ſuch an opinion of him, that they offered him twice a cardinal's hat; but his anſwer was, that ſomewhat dwelt within him which would not ſuffer that, till Rome was otherwiſe than it is. But had they not eſteemed him otherwiſe than he ſhould have been, they had not made the offer.

He maintained an intimate correſpondence with the pope's nuncio, and divers prieſts and jeſuits, conniving at the liberties they took, and threatening the officers who were diligent in apprehending them, whilſt he ſo cruelly perſecuted the Puritans, and introduced ſo many popiſh ceremonies, licenced popiſh books, and ſuppreſſed proteſtant ones, looked very much that way. He likewiſe ſeemed fond of exalting the power of the church to an exorbitant height; he got Dr. Juxon, biſhop of London, to be declared lord high treaſurer of England, which is the greateſt office of benefit in the kingdom, and no prieſt had held this place ſince the darkeſt times of popery, in the reign of Henry VII. This enraged the nobility, and made not only the biſhops, but the inferior clergy ſo proud, that a layman ſcarce dared to approach the tails of their mules. It is no wonder that proud and haughty clergymen ſhould have extolled this prelate to the ſkies, but that he ſhould have found ſo many to reverence his memory amongſt the nobility and gentry, over whom he would have exalted, the oweſt of the people is moſt aſtoniſhing. May the time om e, when miniſters will receive no greater honours, chan their good works merit, then the worthy will re-

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ceive all the reſpect they deſire, and the bad as much as they deſerve. The clergy are juſtly entitled to reſpect, whilſt they behave as the miniſters of a meek and humble Jeſus, and no ſenſible layman will refuſe paying it to ſuch.

Many books were written againſt the biſhops. Dr. Leighton publiſhed an appeal to parliament, or Zion's plea againſt prelacy, in which he called the biſhops, with very great juſtice, men of blood; ſpoke vehemently againſt ceremonies, and denied the king's power of making laws for the houſe of God. He called the queen a daughter of Heth, and has been cenſured by moderate perſons, as rude and indecent; but how men of warm paſſions could behold ſuch vile proceedings, without uttering warm ſpeeches, is hard to ſay. But if the warmth of his expreſſions are not to be juſtified, his ſentence was ſuch as cannot at the diſtance of time be read without horror.

He was committed to the priſon of the Fleet for life, to pay a fine of ten thouſand pounds, to be degraded from his miniſtry, to be brought to the pillory at Weſtminſter and whipt, after whipping, be ſet upon the pillory a convenient time, (which was near two hours in froſt and ſnow) and have one of his ears cut off, one ſide of his noſe ſlit, and be branded in the face with a double S S, for ſower of ſedition: That then he ſhould be carried back to priſon, and after a few days, be pillored a ſecond time in Cheapſide, and be there likewiſe whipt, and have the other ſide of his noſe ſlit, and his other ear cut off, and then to be ſhut up in cloſe priſon for the remainder of his life.

All this was executed with the utmoſt ſeverity. Cruel Laud recorded it in his diary, and ſays, "That on that day ſeven-night (after the firſt part of his ſentence was executed) his ſores upon his back, (of which he received thiry-ſix with a triple cord, every ſtroke bringing away the fleſh) ear, noſe, and face, being not yet cured, he ſuffered the remainder."

This learned man ſuffered many other cruelties, which brevity obliges us to omit. In priſon he was not allowed a bit of bread or drop of water, but what was

paid for; and once, without any offence given, eight ſtrong fellows were ſet upon him, who tore his clothes and bruiſed his body, ſo that he was never well after; and indeed the cruel ſentence juſt mentioned, was paſt upon him, when he was in the height of a ſickneſs, occaſioned (as four phyſicians atteſted) by poiſon given him, for his hair and ſkin came off. When his petition, giving an account of his ſufferings, was read to the parliament, (who releaſed him, after eight years imprisonment in the common gaol) the houſe burſt into tears. And the clerk of that houſe was ordered to ſtop once and again, till they had given ſome vent to their compaſſion; and compoſed their minds. Laud however was ſo hardened to every human feeling, that whilſt the mercileſs ſentence was pronouncing, he pulled off his cap and gave God thanks for it.

A knight of the high commiſſion, moved one of the lords, about the dreadful nature of the ſentence, intimating that it opened a gap to the prelates, to inflict ſuch diſgraceful puniſhments and tortures upon men of quality. That lord replied, it was only *in terrorem*, and that he would not have any one think that the ſentence ſhould ever be executed. This knight's apprehenſion was well grounded; the greateſt nobleman in the kingdom would not be in ſafety if the prieſts ſhould rule. To ſay nothing of the pope, who made emperors hold their ſtirrups, and wait ſeveral days and nights in froſt and ſnow, barefoot at their gates: We find in our own hiſtory, that Henry II. a great and powerful prince, by oppoſing an ungrateful, rebellious wretch whom he had raiſed from obſcurity, was obliged to ſubmit his naked back to be ſcourged by a ſet of vile monks. The cruel puniſhments inflicted on the doctors Burton, Baſtwick, and Mr. Prynne, who, for writing againſt innovations, divine ſuperiority of biſhops, and againſt ſtage plays, were pillored, fined, branded, loſt their ears, and ſuffered impriſonment in the moſt diſtant parts of the kingdom, cannot be related at large.

Theſe proceedings were flagrant breaches upon civil liberty, which indeed is always in danger, or rather vio-

violently infringed, when religious liberty is attacked. The illegal actions of this reign, which were merely civil, cannot be enlarged on. Charles called a parliament ſoon after his acceſſion, but becauſe they would not grant him what he deſired, till they had obtained redreſs for ſome national grievances, he quickly diſſolved them; and that thoſe who had been active in their duty, might not be elected in the next parliament, he cauſed them to be appointed ſheriffs. His ſecond parliament was diſſolved without paſſing a ſingle act, becauſe they impeached his inſolent favourite the duke of Buckingham, and remonſtrated againſt the king's levying money by his royal prerogative. Mr. Chambers, a merchant, for refuſing to pay ſuch levies, was fined two thouſand pounds, beſides the loſs of his goods, and ſuffered ſix years impriſonment, and ſeveral members, for the oppoſition made to this tyranny, were fined, and in a moſt arbitrary and illegal manner impriſoned for ſeveral years. From this time time (1628), Charles called no parliament for upwards of eleven years, and during that whole time his government was little better than one continued violation of the rights of the people; taxes were levied by the royal authority only; upwards of thirty knights, and great numbers of gentlemen in this reign, were taken out of their houſes, and impriſoned at a great diſtance from them, for refuſing to ſubmit to an illegal loan; that is, to lend the king what money the council was pleaſed to aſſeſs. Thoſe of the lower ſort, who refuſed to lend, were preſſed for the army, or had ſoldiers quartered upon them, who diſturbed the peace of families, and committed ſuch frequent robberies, rapes, murders, and barbarous cruelties, inſomuch that the highways were dangerous to travel, and the markets unfrequented.

Charles was obliged to call a parliament in 1640. Never were ſo many great and worthy patriots returned at once; men of gravity, wiſdom, and of plentiful fortunes, and as to their religion, they were all members of the eſtabliſhed church, and ordered that none ſhould ſit in their houſe, who would not receive the communion according to the uſage of the church of England:

They were almoſt to a man for epiſcopal government, and yet they fell ſeverely on the biſhops, and treated them with ſuch ſeverity, as their bittereſt enemies could not have exceeded.

Surely the biſhops muſt have behaved very ill, when their beſt friends thus ſpoke of them, and the common people were ſo incenſed, that it was not ſafe for them to appear in public. The firmneſs of the biſhops againſt all relaxations or abatements in favour of the Puritans, together with their ſteady oppoſition to any alterations in the church, put the commons upon ſeveral ſchemes to divide them; and at length they drew up an impeachment againſt one half of the bench, for making and publiſhing ſome canons, contrary to the fundamental laws of the realm, the king's prerogative, the rights of parliament, and to the properties and liberties of the ſubject. The commons were in hopes they would have quitted their votes in parliament to be diſcharged of the præmunire, but they were reſolved to abide by their right, but being hated by the people, and neglected by the temporal lords, they were little better than cyphers, and ſoon after they were voted out of the houſe by a very great majority, Feb. 6, 1641-2, at which the citizens of London expreſſed their ſatisfaction by ringing of bells and bonfires.

Thus the peerage of the biſhops, and the whole ſecular power of the clergy, ceaſed for about twenty years; to which their ambition, their contempt of the laity, their ſilencing and proſecuting many excellent men, and their ill advice, and ready concurrence, in every thing which tended to deſtroy the liberty of the ſubject, with their prevailing inclination to popery, and not a diſlike to the order itſelf brought about. The preſbyterian diſcipline was afterwards introduced, which, in all probability, would never have been, had not the parliament, to defend their liberties, been obliged to call the Scots to their aſſiſtance, who would not heartily concur without having their own form eſtabliſhed. The hierarchy was therefore deſtroyed, the very names of archbiſhops and biſhops aboliſhed, and their revenues alienated for the payment of the public debts; only al-

allowing a yearly ſalary to ſome of them, which on account of the public confuſion, was but ill paid.

Complaints were made to the houſe againſt ſeveral biſhops and clergymen, but they had not time to attend to their proſecutions. Laud after being impriſoned three years in the tower upon an impeachment of high treaſon, without once petitioning for a trial, or putting in an anſwer to the articles alledged againſt him, was at length brought to a trial before the houſe of lords.

He was accuſed of favouring popery, and ſupporting many tyrannical meaſures, his defence was learned, but no eloquence could gloſs over the facts alledged againſt him, of which I have mentioned but a few. He was ſentenced to be hanged as a traytor, but upon his petition it was altered to beheading, which ſentence was executed, January 10, 1644.

He was long the idol of our eſtabliſhed clergy, who canonized him as a bleſſed martyr for the church of England, but without the leaſt propriety. It was not his ſupporting the doctrine and diſcipline of the church of England as eſtabliſhed by law, but his introducing ceremonies and innovations, without or contrary to law, and preſſing them with cruel ſeverity on the clergy, together with his attempts, to raiſe the king above law, to deſtroy the liberties of the ſubjects, and deprive them of their property, by introducing arbitrary government, which brought him to the block. His writing a learned book againſt popery, and converting ſome from it, as he ſays he did, will hardly acquit him from the charge of being popiſhly inclined, in the opinion of thoſe who conſider his real conduct. Popery by no means conſiſts entirely in believing the abſurdities of tranſubſtantiation, purgatory, image worſhip and ſuch like; monſtrous as theſe doctrine are, a man who believes them may be a good member of ſociety, and whilſt he is ſober, honeſt and induſtrious, (though theſe doctrines, by giving him falſe notions of religion, undoubtedly tend to corrupt the morals, ſince men may allow themſelves in vice here, hoping to eſcape eternal puniſhment, by being purified in purgatory) is on this account of no more detriment to it, than if he

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believed the moon to be made of green cheese. The essence of popery consists, in usurping a power over the conscience, and persecuting men by fire, by imprisonment, or depriving them of any of their natural rights, for differences in opinion: this worst part of popery Laud, and his party embraced and espoused, and it is probable only opposed the pope of Rome, that he himself might be a pope at Lambeth. This desire of exalting himself, seems to account for the dislike some papists entertained towards him; but if we must have a pope, let him be rather at Rome, than in England, by keeping him at a distance, our condition might be tolerable, but if the power of the pope was vested in a priest at Lambeth, England would soon be what Italy (the pope's territories especially) is now poor, desolate and miserable.

The breaches in the constitution, were not likely to be healed, since the king would assent to nothing but what he was forced to, and even came in person, attended by an armed force to take five members out of the house, who appeared to be the most strenuous in opposing his measures. This was an unparallelled act of violence, and tended to destroy the being of parliaments, since the same rule by which he could take five, would have given him a right to take out any number of the members. A war ensued, the parliament army had at least an appearance of decency and religion, and when complaints were made of ravages committed by some, the offenders were made examples of, and a stop put to the evil, but several of the king's generals were debauched, cruel, and superlatively wicked, and his soldiers were infamous for execrable oaths and all kind of impieties. This the king's friends cannot deny, and it would have been to his credit, to have removed such officers as were remarkable for their crimes, which might have tended to reform the soldiers, some of whom as Lord Clarendon acknowledges, "committed such horrid outrages, that people who were well devoted to the king, wished for the accession of any forces to redeem them;" many joined the parliament army, because their soldiers

diers appeared ſober, whilſt the king's were drunk, and prayed while the others ſwore. It was in 1641, that the papiſts in Ireland maſſacred, and that in a manner the moſt cruel and barbarous, two hundred thouſand proteſtants, ſome indeed have carried the number much higher, and others have laboured to reduce it. Whether the king had any hand in this will perhaps remain to be diſputed, it is ſomewhat remarkable, that he would never ſtile them rebels, though he freely beſtowed that name upon the parliament, who were defending their juſt rights, and it was but a few days after he had ſolemly declared never to connive at popery, and wiſhed the ſacrament he was taken might be his damnation, if his heart did not join with his lips, it was but a few days after this that he agreed to a ceſſation with the Iriſh papiſts for a year, and granted them a toleration of their religion. He allowed the Iriſh catholics, to take legal poſſeſſion of the eſtates they had conquered from the murdered proteſtants, ordered the Duke of Ormond to draw off his forces from thence, and ſome hundreds of theſe execrable wretches joined themſelves to the king's army, which drew off from him many of his friends who had the proteſtant religion at heart.

In the end however the king was entirely ſubdued, and the officers of the army, by violently preventing the houſe of commons from aſſembling, ſeizing, or denying entrance to ſuch members, as were for conciliating meaſures, got his majeſty into their own power, and conſtituted what they called a high court of juſtice, to the bar of which his majeſty was brought, who diſowned the juriſdiction of the court, and with great reaſon and juſtice, demanded to be heard by the lords and commons, but the court would not ſuffer their authority to be diſputed, and the preſident Bradſhaw pronounced ſentence of death againſt him as a traytor, which ſentence was executed, Tueſday, January 30, 1648, by ſevering his head from his body.

Charles was chaſte, temperate, grave, learned, diligent and exact in performing external acts of religion, and was a pattern to others in what relates to the wor-

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ſhip of God, ſo that it is much to be wondered at he ſhould have encouraged ſports on the Lords-day, however he was ſuperſtitious in regarding trifling accidents as omens, but this was nothing to his bigotry which was exceſſive, and led him to ſuffer cruel perſecutions of his own ſubjects, indeed he ſeemed to be naturally hard hearted, and as to his honour, probity and promiſes, no dependance could be placed on them, and his attempts to exalt his prerogative, to the deſtruction of the national rights of his ſubjects which he had ſworn to maintain, will render his memory deteſtable to every Briton.

After the reſtoration, a form of prayer with faſting was appointed to be uſed on the 30th of January, in which he is ſtiled a martyr, a title which he firſt gave himſelf, but he was a martyr to his own arbitrary conduct, and not for maintaining religion, liberty or virtue. The ſcriptures which mention the kings of Iſrael as the lords anointed, are miſerably perverted in this ſervice and at all times, when applied to princes, who receive their crowns from the people or the laws of their country, without any ſpecial appointment of God, like the kings of Iſrael.

The clergy have taken great pains to exalt Charles on this day in their ſermons, he has been parallelled with Jeſus Chriſt, and Dr. Binks in a ſermon before the convocation, ſeems to give Charles the preference, as I think Dr. South does.

The impiety of theſe perſons, can only be equaled by the wilful miſrepreſentations of others, who, while they bleſſed Charles as a God, curſed the diſſenters with a wrath which no man could tame. But as it is an undeniable fact, that thoſe who oppoſed Charles at firſt, were members of the church of England, ſo it is as true, that the preſbyterians did all in their power to prevent his being put to death, and that this act was perpetrated by an army of enthuſiaſts, made up of all parties *.

* It might however have been expected, that in time men would have been aſhamed of taking this opportunity of exalting arbitrary power, and bringing railing accuſations. But Dr. Thomas Nowell, principal of St. Mary Hall, king's profeſſer of modern

CHAP. III.

THE government for about twelve years after the death of Charles, was in a very unſettled ſtate, and underwent many changes. Epiſcopacy had been deſtroyed, and the common prayer ſet aſide, in the late king's reign the firſt by his own conſent but againſt his will, and the latter entirely without his concurrence. The reaſons given by the parliament for ſetting aſide the common prayer, were, that notwithſtanding all the pains and religious intentions of the compilers, it had proved an offence to many of the godly at home, and to the reformed churches abroad, that the prelates had raiſed the eſtimation of it to ſuch a height, as if God could be worſhipped in no other way, in conſequence of which the preaching of the word had been depreciated, and in ſome places entirely neglected. That it had given encouragement to an idle miniſtry, who choſe rather to confine themſelves to forms, then exert their abilities in the gift of prayer, and that it

dern hiſtory, and public orator in the univerſity of Oxford, preached ſuch a ſermon before the houſe of commons, January the 30th, 1772, from Numbers, xvi. 3. as gives us but ſmall hopes of ſeeing a regard to liberty and truth, more ſtrictly obſerved. This worthy profeſſor calls Charles the beſt of princes, the grievances of the people pretended, abuſes the Puritans with a virulence, as partial as the character he gives of them is falſe, and has the daring aſſurance, to compare our preſent ſovereign with a prince who is now ſo generally deteſted. Indeed he mentions ſome papers to be publiſhed which will ſet Charles in a moſt amiable light, never can this be till his actions are blotted from the hiſtorical page. It is ſomewhat ſtrange that theſe papers were never publiſhed before, if they are to his majeſties honour, ſince it cannot be diſputed that his friends ſuppreſſed ſome which would have effectually ruined his character with every honeſt man. What reward Dr. Nowell expected for his ſermon, he can beſt tell, it muſt however have been very mortifying to him, that the houſe of commons ſhould have reſcinded their too precipitate vote of thanks, and it may be hoped that he will acquaint himſelf better with his province, before he reads hiſtorical lectures to the young gentlemen of the univerſity, whoſe tender minds may be eaſily corrupted.

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helped to confirm the papiſts in their idolatry and ſuperſtition, ſince they boaſted, that the common prayer came up to a compliance with a great part of their ſervice, (being a tranſlation of popiſh forms, ſo that king James once called it "an evil maſs ſaid in-Engliſh, they want nothing of the maſs but the liſtings." A directory therefore was ſubſtituted in its ſtead, which was not an abſolute form of devotion, but contains ſome general directions, taken partly from the word of God, and partly from rules of Chriſtian prudence, pointing out the heads of publick prayer and preaching, and leaving the miniſter a latitude to fill up the vacancies according to his abilities. This directory contained ſuch inſtructions as were well worthy of attention, but it was a conſiderable time before it was univerſally conformed to, many continued the old liturgy, ſome would read no form, and others would uſe one of their own.

The parliament therefore, impoſed a fine upon all ſuch miniſters as would not uſe the directory, or any who ſhould preach, write, or print any thing againſt it.

The common prayer books were all removed from the churches, and ſevere penalties inflicted on thoſe who ſhould uſe them in the family, or in private. This was unreaſonable and cruel, if they had a right to prevent its being uſed in the eſtabliſhed churches, perſons in ſeparate aſſemblies, or private families, ought to have been left at full liberty; but the rights of conſcience were at this time but little underſtood, all parties were infected with that worſt of errors, a perſecuting temper.

The clergy have made great complaints of the ſufferings, their brethren experienced in theſe unſettled times. The ſolemn league and covenant, which was ordered to be taken by all perſons in the kingdom above eighteen years of age, by which they promiſed to preſerve the reformed religion in the church of Scotland, to endeavour a reformation in the churches of England and Ireland, and the extirpation of popery and prelacy, that is church government by archbiſhops, biſhops, &c. was a real grievance. All who refuſed taking it, were excluded from offices, religious, civil,

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or military, but it was not preſſed with ſtrict ſeverity, and adminiſtred chiefly to thoſe, who had been zealous in the king's intereſt, ſo that they ſuffered more as parties in the war than as friends to the church, and few of the epiſcopal divines who afterwards made a great figure in the church, refuſed to take it, though when reſtored to power, they would ſhew no mercy to ſuch as would not abjure it, but made them quit their livings. It was however a religious teſt, and the impoſing it a great hardſhip.

Dr. Walker drew up a folio book, containing above 400 pages in ſmall print, called an attempt towards recovering an account of the numbers and ſufferings of the clergy, and indeed he has ſufficiently magnified both. He ſays without the leaſt foundation, that ten thouſand miniſters ſuffered on the church ſide, and reckons it modeſt to fall to eight thouſand, his liſt however makes out little more than a fifth part of them, many of whom were rejected for inſufficiency, groſs immorality, and others for their ſteady adherence to the king, and it may be well ſuppoſed, that when the parliament were defending their liberties with their lives, they would attempt to ſuppreſs ſuch as vigorouſly oppoſed them, and the laws of war juſtify ſuch a conduct, ſo far as to render them more excuſable.

The parliament and their adherents, have been often called rebels, and ſo indeed they were, if oppoſing arbitrary power, and contending for their juſt right is rebellion, as the advocates for tyranny will always call it. Vaſt numbers of the clergy were pluraliſts, but if a man has two or three or five or ſix livings as ſome of them had, and is obliged to be content with one of them, it is no great perſecution unleſs it can be proved that one ought to have ſeveral livings, and others be quite unprovided for. By the beſt computations, it appears that the ſufferers on the church ſide could not amount to more than two thouſand, taking the ignorant and vicious into the account, and theſe were allowed a fifth part of the ſequeſtered livings, and many of them were regularly paid, but it is no wonder there ſhould have been ſome deficiencies,

when the ravages of war would deſtroy all the income, and great numbers under various pretences refuſed to pay any tithes at all. Many who were peaceable remained unmoleſted, ſome went on uſing the liturgy and ceremonies, and many as Dr. Fuller himſelf, a churchman aſſures us, would not have been diſturbed had they not printed and preached ſatyrs on the times. Many excellent men were undoubtedly great ſufferers, but the nonconformiſts a few years after, would have thought themſelves happy in enjoying theſe privileges, which the clergy retained under their ſharpeſt perſecutions.

The Puritan miniſters have been generally ſtiled a ſet of canting, illiterate men, famous for nothing but their fanatic enthuſiaſm, and their hypocriſy. This is nothing more than the rant of ignorant or fiery bigots. Their very enemies have confeſſed, that notwithſtanding the learning and merit of many who were ejected from the univerſities, ſuch were placed in their ſtead, as kept more than a common watch over the morals of the ſtudents. They were indefatigable in inſtructing their pupils, both in public and private, ſtrict piety and a profeſſion of religion were in faſhion, while drunkenneſs, oaths, and the profanation of the Lord's day, were baniſhed. As many of the profeſſors left eternal monuments of their abilities behind them, ſo thoſe who were afterwards the glory of the church of England, and will always be reckoned, amongſt the greateſt divines the world ever produced, ſuch as Tillotſon, Barrow, the great Locke and many others, owed their education to, and always retained the greateſt reſpect for theſe tutors; for as lord Clarendon acknowledges, it yielded an extraordinary harveſt in all kinds of good learning. Amongſt the parochial clergy, ſome no doubt were mean and unfit, but never was there a greater number of pious good men in the miniſtry, who applied more diligently to their work, and did more ſervice to the ſouls of men; ſo that when we read of the church's being laid in ruins, we muſt underſtand no more by it, than that its temporal powers languiſhed, lordſhips, pluralities, &c. were

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taken away, but religion and virtue flouriſhed. There was ſomething like religion, which perhaps was nothing more than the faſhion of the times, but there was alſo much of the reality. The legal conſtitution was broken in pieces, but never were better laws made againſt vice, or better put in execution. The dreſs, the language, the converſation of the people was ſober and virtuous; their manner of living frugal; there was hardly a bankruptcy to be heard of in a year, nor could the bankrupt ever wipe off the infamy; trade was not indeed ſo extenſive as at preſent, yet ſtill there was no manner of proportion between theſe times and the following ones, with regard to failures. All kinds of prophaneneſs were quite out of faſhion, the Lord's day was obſerved with unuſual ſtrictneſs, ſcarce any were ſeen walking in the ſtreets, but the churches were filled, and between the hours of divine ſervice, reading the ſcriptures and ſinging pſalms, with catechizing and other religious duties, were the employments of moſt families. There was a ſet of as pious and learned youths in the univerſities as had been known; ſo that let high churchmen ſay what they will, they can never produce a time when that religion, which conſiſts in a devout worſhip of God, and the practice of ſound morals, flouriſhed more. The ſtate of things was much changed after the reſtoration, and to thoſe who will ſeriouſly conſider the matter, it will appear, that we have been declining ever ſince in that righteouſneſs which exalteth a nation. Public worſhip daily grows into diſeſteem, family worſhip, and the inſtructing children and ſervants are almoſt univerſally neglected, luxury and diſſipation prevail amongſt all ranks, the prophaneneſs of the generality, eſpecially in making free with the great and awful name of God, is ſhocking; ſo that it is almoſt impoſſible to get into a company, were four out of ſix do not with their looſe expreſſions, ſhock a true Chriſtian's ears. Thoſe who are deſcended from men remarkable for their ſobriety, ought to conſider this, for however lightly they may

treat the matter, it renders them utterly inexcuſable.

After the death of Oliver Cromwell, the government was in greater confuſion than before. The preſbyterians were however very zealous and hearty for the reſtoration of Charles II. as he himſelf acknowledged, in his declaration concerning eccleſiaſtical affairs. "When (ſays he) we were in Holland, we were attended by many grave and learned miniſters, from hence, of the preſbyterian opinion, and to our great ſatisfaction we found them full of affection to us." Biſhop Burnet acknowledges, that many of the preſbyterian miniſters, chiefly in the city of London, had gone into the deſign of the reſtoration in ſo ſignal a manner, and with ſuch ſucceſs, that that they had great merit, and a juſt title to very high preferment. Mr. Baxter gives the following reaſons for their conduct. "They were influenced by the covenant, by which, and by the oaths of allegiance to the king and his heirs, they held themſelves bound to do their utmoſt to reſtore the king, let the event be what it would. But moſt of them had great expectations of favour and reſpect, they hoped ſubſcriptions would be removed, and the common prayer and ceremonies left indifferent. Others depended on ſuch a liberty (a bare toleration) as the proteſtants in France had; but thoſe who were better acquainted with the principles and tempers of the prelates, declared that they expected to be ſilenced, impriſoned and baniſhed; but yet they would do all to reſtore the king, becauſe no foreſeen ill conſequences ought to hinder them from doing their duty."

The king was voted home in a great hurry, without any terms being made, of which the nation had afterwards great reaſon to repent. It is very certain that Charles turned papiſt abroad, but on his coming to Whitehall, ten of the preſbyterian miniſters were made his chaplains; and the king publiſhed a declaration, which contented the greateſt number, both in town and country, and had it paſſed into a law, it would

would in a great meaſure have prevented the ſeparation that followed; but neither the king nor the miniſtry intended it ſhould, if they could ſtand their ground upon the foot of the old eſtabliſhment. However, upon the terms of this declaration, the learned Dr. Reynolds accepted the biſhopric of Norwich. Mr. Baxter refuſed that of Hereford, for ſome other reaſons; and Mr. Calamy that of Litchfield and Coventry, till the king's declaration ſhould paſs into a law. Dr. Bates. Dr. Manton, and Mr. Bowles, refuſed the deaneries of Litchfield, Rocheſter, and York, finding how things were likely to go at court. This was acting with true Chriſtian prudence, for had they accepted theſe preferments, it might have been a ſnare to them, to comply with what was afterwards impoſed; but not being ſo much entangled, they were better able to witneſs a good confeſſion, and undergo the enſuing perſecution.

Both the lords and commons, on reading the king's declaration, agreed to wait on him in a body and return him their thanks; and the commons ordered a bill to be brought in to paſs it into a law, but the queſtion being put for a ſecond reading, it paſſed in the negative, and there was ſufficient proof that the king and court were averſe to it, notwithſtanding their pretences. The biſhops ſoon began to act in ſuch a manner, as to give the preſbyterians reaſon plainly to tell them, as they accordingly did, that they perceived their counſels againſt peace were likely to be accompliſhed, and that they were like to be gratified with their ſilence and ejection. When the declaration was rejected they were at eaſe, and went on briſkly, reſtoring all things to their old ſtandard; men of the higheſt principles, and the moſt inveterate againſt the preſbyterians, were preferred to the biſhoprics, and the perſecution began.

Mr. Croſton, miniſter of Aldgate, was impriſoned for writing in defence of the covenant, and after being put to great expence, was turned out of his pariſh, without any conſideration, though he had a wife and ſeven children, and had been very zealous

for the king's reſtoration. Mr. Parſons, rector of Wem in Yorkſhire, a noted loyaliſt, was taken from his houſe by ſix ſoldiers, for ſeditious preaching and nonconformity to the ceremonies; (in the king's declaration it was promiſed theſe ſhould be left indifferent) for which he was fined two hundred pounds, and to continue in priſon till paid. Spies were ſent into the congregations of the preſbyterians throughout England, and if a miniſter lamented the degeneracy of the times, (for which there was great occaſion, ſince vice came in with his majeſty like a flood) or expreſſed his concern for the ark of God; if he preached againſt perfidiouſneſs, or glanced at the vices of the court, he was marked for an enemy to the king and government. Many loyal preſbyterians were ſent to priſon upon ſuch informations, among whom was the learned and prudent Mr. Howe, and others; and when they came to their trials, the court was guarded with ſoldiers, and their friends not ſuffered to ſpeak to them. So eager were the ſpiritual courts to revive their power, that many were ſequeſtered from their livings, and cited into them, for not wearing the ſurplice, and uſing the ceremonies even before they were properly reſtored. About forty bills of indictment were found by the grand jury at Exeter, againſt miniſters, for not reading the common prayer. An act was likewiſe paſt for reſtoring thoſe miniſters who had been ſequeſtered from their livings; which would have been reaſonable enough, had it extended only to thoſe who ſuffered for their attachment to the late king, but ſuch as had been guilty of the groſſeſt immoralities had the ſame favour; by which means ſome hundreds of the nonconformiſts were deprived before the act of uniformity was paſſed; but the king promiſed they ſhould be reſtored when the preſent poſſeſſor died. Another act was alſo paſſed, enacting that no perſons ſhall hereafter be choſen into any place of honour, profit, or truſt, that ſhall not within one year next before ſuch an election or choice, have taken the Lord's ſupper, according to the rights of the church of England.

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Thus was this holy ordinance ſhamefully polluted, and the nonconformiſts, as a reward for their paſt ſervices, were diſqualified for all poſts at once.

March 25, 1661, according to a promiſe in his majeſty's declaration, an equal number of preſbyterians and epiſcopal divines were appointed to review the liturgy of the church, and make ſuch alterations and additions as ſhould be thought neceſſary. This was called the Savoy conference, being held at the Savoy. It had been concluded beforehand at court, to make only a few amendments in the liturgy, and nothing more was intended than to drop the preſbyterians with ſome plauſible decency. Their arguments had little weight with the biſhops, though they ſhewed themſelves to be men of learning, and well verſed in the practice of the ancient church; but they were interrupted, affronted, and a number of young divines who were admitted, laughed them to ſcorn. From arguments the miniſters deſcended to entreaties, and prayed the biſhops to have compaſſion on ſcrupulous minds, and not deſpiſe their weaker brethren. They put them in mind that if the nonconformiſts ſhould be turned out, there would not be miniſters enough to fill the vacant pulpit; they urged their peaceable behaviour in the late times, what they had ſuffered for the royal cauſe, and the great ſhare they had in reſtoring the king; they pleaded his majeſty's late declaration, and the deſign of the preſent conference. To all which the biſhops replied, that they were only commiſſioned to make ſuch alterations in the liturgy as ſhould be neceſſary, and ſuch as ſhould be agreed upon. The miniſters ſaid the word *neceſſary* muſt refer to tender conſciences, but the biſhops replied, they found no alterations *neceſſary*, and were not obliged to make them till they were proved ſo. The miniſters prayed them to conſider the ill conſequences that might follow upon a ſeparation. But all was to no purpoſe, their lordſhips were in the ſaddle, and would not abate the ſmalleſt ceremony, nor correct the groſſeſt error, though one would think, if they had had the leaſt regard to the

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honour of God, the peace of the church, or the good of ſouls, they would have complied a little.

The king's commiſſion expired, July 25, and the conference ended withoout any proſpect of accommodation, and on the 20th of November, the king ſent a letter to the convocation, (to frame which according to the mind of the court, and biſhops, great care and pains were uſed to keep out, and to get in men by undue proceedings, and proteſta ions were made againſt all incumbents not ordained by biſhops. Some hundreds of the preſbyterians had likewiſe been turned out of their livings, but that intereſt carried it in London for Mr. Baxter and Mr. Calamy, but Sheldon biſhop of London, who had a power of chooſing four out of ſix within a certain circuit, left them both out) commanding them to revive the book of common prayer, and to make ſuch additions and amendments as ſhould be thought neceſſary. Many alterations were made, but biſhop Burnet confeſſes, "none in favour of the preſbyterians, ſo that the common prayer was more exceptionable, and the terms of conformity harder than before." There is great reaſon to ſuppoſe that matters were were ſo contrived, as to keep out the preſbyterians, for when the earl of Mancheſter told the king, "That the forms of conformity were ſo hard, that he feared many miniſters would not comply with them, biſhop Sheldon replied, that he was afraid they would; and when Dr. Allen ſaid, it was a pity the door was ſo ſtrait, "It's no pity, ſaid this good biſhop, if we had thought ſo many of them would have conformed, we would have made it ſtraiter."

The act of uniformity was carried in the houſe of commons by a majority of but ſix, and met with greater obſtacles in the houſe of lords, who would have excepted ſchool-maſters, &c. from ſuch ſubſcriptions, (all ſuch are by law obliged to ſubſcribe as well as miniſters, ſome were called upon lately, and proſecuted,) but the commons being ſupported by the court would abate nothing, nor conſent to any proviſion for ſuch as ſhould be ejected, ſo on May the 19th, it received the royal aſſent, and was to take place Auguſt the 24th following,

ing, being St. Bartholomew's-day. But the common prayer book with the alterations to which aſſent was demanded, was not publiſhed till within a few days of that time, ſo that as many hundreds could not poſſibly ſee it, many did it without, and others were ejected for not complying with they knew not what. Great numbers ſcrupled the buſineſs of the ordination, thinking it implied a renouncing the validity of their former orders from preſbyters, and had it not been for a very ſoftening clauſe, "to wit, that reordination by a biſhop did not annihilate former orders, (if the miniſter had any) but only ſupplied what was wanting according to the canons of the church of England," few clergymen in Ireland, where alone this explication was permitted, would have kept their ſtation in the church. Many of the miniſters had other objections, but the principal one was: "That they could not give their aſſent and conſent, to all and every thing continued in the book of common prayer;" that the greateſt part is good and uſeful might perhaps be aſſented to without ſo much ſcruple, but to all and every thing, it is hard no doubt, for many clergymen now in the church to aſſent.

Mr. Baxter and ſome others quitted their ſtations in the church before the time mentioned in the act, that ſo they might let the miniſters all over England know their intention before hand; others preached their farewell ſermons on the Sunday before that day, and ſhewed in them ſuch a paſſionate zeal for the welfare of their people, that their audiences were melted into tears. At length the fatal Bartholomew's-day came, when about two thouſand quitted their prefermentsin the church, or refuſed to accept of any upon the terms of the act of uniformity. An example hardly to be parallelled in the Chriſtian world:

"Here were men much valued (ſays biſhop Burnet) and diſtinguiſhed by their abilities and zeal, now caſt out ignominiouſly, reduced to great poverty, provoked by much ſpiteful uſage, and caſt upon thoſe popular practices, which both their principles and practices ſeemed to juſtify, of forming ſeparate congregations, and of diverting men from the public worſhip." At the re-

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formation from popery, by queen Elizabeth, there were not above two hundred deprived of their livings, and theſe were treated with great mildneſs, having ſome allowance out of the church. Beſides, the ingratitude of the church party ought to be taken notice of. A divine of the church thus writes, "I muſt own, that in my judgment, however both ſides have been exceſſively to blame, yet that the ſeverities uſed by the church to the diſſenters, are leſs excuſable than thoſe uſed by the diſſenters to the church. My reaſon is, that the former were uſed in times of peace and a ſettled government, whereas the latter were inflicted in a time of tumult and confuſion; ſo that the plunderings and ravages of church miniſters, were owing, many of them at leaſt, to the rudeneſs of the ſoldiers and the chances of war; they were plundered not becauſe they were conformiſts, but cavaliers and of the king's party (it might have been added, that the ſufferings of the Puritans had been for many years ſo grievous and exceſſive, that their ſpirits muſt have been in ſome meaſure warmed, againſt the authors of them who ought to have learnt wiſdom by the rod, ſince when men bite and devour one another, it is much if they are not conſumed one of another.) The allowing of the ſequeſtered miniſters a fifth part of their livings, was a Chriſtian act, and what I confeſs I ſhould have been glad to have ſeen imitated at the reſtoration. But no mercy was ſhewn to theſe unhappy ſufferers."

The ingratitude of the high church-men can never be forgot, "Who (ſays a divine of the church of England) can anſwer for the violence and injuſtice of actions in a civil war, theſe ſufferings (of the churchmen) were in a time of general calamity, but thoſe were ejected not only in a time of peace, but a time of joy to all the land, and after an act of oblivion, when all pretended to be reconciled and made friends, and to whoſe common rejoicings theſe ſuffering miniſters had contributed their earneſt prayers and great endeavours."

Notwithſtanding their good ſervices they were caſt entirely upon providence to beg or ſtarve, or get bread how they could. Some were taken as chaplains into

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good families, and charitable contributions were made for their relief. But many hundreds of them had neither houſe nor bread; the people they left were not able, nor durſt they relieve them, leaſt it ſhould have been called a maintenance or ſchiſm of faction. A church writer reckoning up their ſufferings ſays, amongſt many other grievances, "Though they were as frugal as poſſible, they could hardly live; ſome had little more than brown bread and water; many had but eight or ten pounds a year to maintain a family, ſo that a piece of fleſh has not come to one of their tables in ſix weeks time; their allowance could ſcarce afford them bread and cheeſe. One went to plow ſix days and preached on the Lord's-day; another cut tobacco for a livelihood. The zealous juſtices of the peace, who knew the calamities of the miniſters, iſſued out warrants upon ſome of the hearers, becauſe of the poverty of the preachers." They were railed at in the pulpit under the name of fanatics, run down in a ſhameful manner at the univerſities, expoſed in the play-houſes, in a manner ſhocking to religion, and inſulted by the mob, ſo that they were obliged to walk in diſguiſe.

Beſides what they ſuffered in common with the laity the five mile act fell heavily upon them. By this act all nonconformiſt miniſters were forbidden on pain of ſix months impriſonment to come or be (except merely in paſſing the road) within five miles of any corporation or place, where they had been miniſters; unleſs they would take an oath, of which the earl of Southampton, though a courtier, ſaid no honeſt man could take (it was an oath not at any time to endeavour any alteration in the church or ſtate). If ſuch an act as this was paſſed, in a popiſh or heathen country, neither reformation could be introduced into the one, nor Chriſtianity into the other, and if a people were once enſlaved no efforts to recover their liberties could be tried.

But what grieved them moſt of all was, that they were ſhut out from their uſefulneſs. Never was there a ſet of miniſters more zealous for the beſt intereſt of their people, never any who laboured more diligently both in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon. But now they could not preach or even pray in their families, if five, beſides their

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own houſhold were preſent without having their effects ſeized, and themſelves committed to priſon to be arraigned at quarter ſeſſions like felons. They did what they could to keep themſelves within the compaſs of the law, and preached frequently twice a day in large families with only four ſtrangers, and as many under ſixteen years of age as would come, ſuch being not excluded by the act.

Sometimes they would venture to preach in fields and woods, but notwithſtanding the utmoſt prudence, numbers of them were committed to priſon, confined for months, caught ſuch diſorders as ruined their healths, ſhortened their lives, and ſome died in goal. The nonconformiſt miniſters, as they were now called, have been generally repreſented as weak, enthuſiaſtical, and ſour; their works will bear an eternal teſtimony to their learning, and ought not to be deſpiſed becauſe our language has been greatly improved ſince their time. Their great enmity to vice of all ſorts, and to ſuch diverſions as are now called innocent, plays in particular, which at that time abounded with prophaneneſs and obſcenity, has been called ſourneſs, and debaucheries of the court were ſo exceſſive, as to be enough to ſet all ſober perſons againſt it; and it ſhould be conſidered, that their ſufferings were ſuch as to make great alterations in their natural temper, and in a great meaſure deſtroy that chearfulneſs and feſtivity which eaſier circumſtances would have produced; and one would think no one can doubt of their ſincerity when they ſuffered ſuch hardſhips for conſcience ſake. Hypocrites only put on an appearance of religion to ſerve ſome preſent end, but will not wear the maſk when it only expoſes them to ſevere troubles and difficulties; and as to enthuſiaſm, a firm ſteady piety, evince that religion was deeply rooted in their hearts. The great Mr. Locke, who lived in theſe times, calls them, "Worthy, learned, pious, orthodox divines, who did not throw themſelves out of ſervice, but were forcibly ejected." I have heard them vilified, ſays a learned conformiſt, but I dare not but be juſt to them as to eminent profeſſors of the Chriſtian faith, and think that common Chriſtianity

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has ſuffered much by their ſilence and diſparagement.

Theſe excellent men being caſt out, there was not a ſupply of miniſters to carry on the work of religion. For though all the ſtriplings in both univerſities were employed, many poor livings in the country had no incumbents for a conſiderable time, ſo that a ſtrict churchman complains with great warmth of above three thouſand miniſters admitted into the church, who were unable to teach becauſe of their youth, of fifteen hundred debauched men ordained, and of the ordination of many illiterate ones. And even a cobler publiſhed an account of a great number of ſcandalous conformiſt miniſters, and named their ſcandal to the great diſpleaſure of the clergy, and I fear (ſaid Mr. Baxter) many of the conformiſt were glad of any thing to humble the prelates.

The young clergy, ſays a learned conformiſt, were florid preachers, and had more of a romantic than divine ſtile, who captivated men at firſt, but did little ſervice to their ſouls, and in proceſs of time had fewer friends and admirers than at firſt. Many who complyed with the terms of conformity did it, not becauſe they liked them, but for the ſake of their families, and becauſe they were unwilling to be buried in ſilence, of theſe were the famous biſhops Reynolds, Wilkins, Hopkins and Fowler, with many others. Near two thouſand however to their honour be it ſpoken, choſe reproaches, afflictions and want, rather than comply with what they thought unlawful. Much they ſuffered in the glorious cauſe of liberty and truth. Peace and everlaſting honour be upon their heads, future generations will riſe up and call them bleſſed! It is likewiſe worthy of remembrance, that the people would not ſuffer their miniſters to bear all the burthen. They eſteemed and loved them, and notwithſtanding all the terror of penal laws would attend their preaching, and expoſed themſelves to be fined, plundered and impriſoned, in ſupport of thoſe who for conſcience ſake towards God endured grief. They gave them ſuch a maintenance as they were able, helped them out of priſon, ſupport-

ed them there, and by their ſteady zeal were often made their companions. The corporation act incapacitated them from ſerving in the loweſt offices of truſt, as did the teſt act from any places of profit, but if they were called to any burdenſome offices their being nonconformiſt would not excuſe them. But the worſt of all was the conventicle act. By this the act of the 25th of Elizabeth, was declared to be in full force, which condemns all perſons refuſing peremptorily to come to church, after conviction, to baniſhment, and in caſe of return, to death. It enacts farther, that if any perſon above the age of ſixteen, after the firſt of July, 1664, ſhall be preſent at any meeting, under pretence of any exerciſe of religion, in other manner than is allowed by the liturgy or practice of the church of England, where ſhall be five or more perſons, than the houſhold, (above the age of ſixteen) ſhall for the firſt offence ſuffer three months impriſonment, or pay a ſum not exceeding five pounds; for the ſecond offence ſix months impriſonment, or ten pounds; and for the third offence, be baniſhed to ſome of the American plantations for ſeven years, or pay one hundred pounds, excepting New-England and Virginia, and in caſe they return, or make their eſcape, ſuch perſons are to be adjudged felons, and ſuffer death without benefit of clergy. Sheriffs or juſtices of the peace, or others commiſſioned by them, are empowered to diſſolve, diſſipate and break up all unlawful conventicles, and to take into cuſtody ſuch of their number as they ſhall think fit. They who ſuffer ſuch conventicles in their houſes or barns, are liable to the ſame forfeitures as other offenders. The proſecution is to be within three months. Married women taken at conventicles, are to be impriſoned for three months, unleſs their huſbands pay forty ſhillings for their redemption.

This was a terrible ſcourge upon the laity, put into the hands of a ſingle juſtice of peace, without the verdict of a jury, the oath of an informer being ſufficient. The deſign of this parliament (ſays Rapin) was to drive them to deſpair, and force them into real crimes againſt the government. By means of this act, the goals were quickly

quickly filled with diſſenting proteſtants, whilſt the papiſts were ſheltered by the court. Some miniſters who went to church in ſermon time, were diſturbed for preaching to a few after ſervice was over, their houſes were broken open, twenty pounds levied upon the miniſter, twenty pounds upon the houſe, and a crown upon each hearer. If the money was not immediately paid, goods were ſeized, and cattle were driven away and ſold for half the value, if the ſeizure did not anſwer the fine, miniſters and people were hurried to priſon and confined for three or ſix months. The trade of an informer was become ſo very gainful, that numbers of vile profligate fellows diſperſed themſelves all over the nation, to find out private meetings. The money got in this way never proſpered, but was ſpent upon lewd women in taverns, gaming and debauchery, moſt of them died in poverty and want, and could not with all their plunder keep out of priſon; great numbers by their vile courſes brought themſelves to miſerable and untimely ends: others however ſtarted up in their room, and the court and many of the biſhops puſhed them on to do all the miſchief they could. Mr. Locke, biſhop Burnet, and others have ſet a black mark upon them, but there were others of a better ſpirit.

In the dioceſe of Saliſbury the perſecution was hotteſt, by the inſtigation of biſhop Ward, a very learned but a very cruel man, many hundreds being proſecuted with great induſtry, and driven from their families and trades. Informers crept into religious aſſemblies in diſguiſe, ſoldiers broke into the houſe of honeſt farmers, under pretence of ſearching for conventicles. Many were plundered of their houſhold furniture, the ſick had their beds taken from under them, and were laid on the floor. At Eaſt Salcomb in Devonſhire, one Joan Boſton, a widow aged and blind, was fined twelve pounds for a ſuppoſed conventicle, and for non-payment threatened with a goal. After ſome weeks the officers broke open her doors, carried away goods to above the value of the fine. They ſold as many goods as were worth 13l. for fifty ſhillings, ſix hogſheads valued at forty ſhillings for nine ſhillings, and pewter,

feather beds, &c. for twenty ſhillings, beſides the rent which they demanded of her tenants.——Mr. Thompſon a miniſter at Briſtol, was apprehended on the corporation act, and refuſing to take the Oxford oath was committed to priſon, where he was ſeized with a fever through the noſomeneſs of the place, a phyſician adviſed his removal, and a bond of five hundred pounds was offered the ſheriff for his ſecurity. Application alſo was made to the biſhop but without ſucceſs, ſo he died in priſon, declaring that had he foreſeen the conſequences he ſhould have acted as he did. The informers broke into the houſes of Sir John Hartoppe, Mr. Fleetwood and others, at Stoke Newington near London, to levy diſtreſs for conventicles to the value of ſix, or ſeven thouſand pounds, the like was done in other places. Injunctions were ſent out from ſeveral of the biſhops under their ſeals, requiring all church-wardens to preſent ſuch as did not receive the ſacrament at church at Eaſter. For neglect of this, many were cited into the ſpiritual courts, where if they did not appear, an excommunication followed, unleſs by ſome powerful bribe they got themſelves excuſed.

At Newcaſtle, about twenty young men met once a week for mutual aſſiſtance and improvement in religion, by prayer and conference, having ſubſcribed ſome rules for the better ordering of their ſociety; being informed againſt by one of their number, were thrown into goal where they lay a year to the ſurpriſe of the town, and then a bill charging them with high treaſon was prepared, and ſuch a jury procured, as would have brought them in guilty. But Charles II. dying before the next aſſizes, they were called to the bar and ſet at liberty, judge Jeffries telling them, that a new king coming to the throne had ſaved all their lives.

The Scotch nation had from the beginning of the reformation a great averſion to epiſcopacy, ariſing perhaps from the cruelties of the popiſh biſhops, and the principles of their firſt reformers, but the government of the church by preſbyters according to their model, was full as tyrannical as any whatever, and none could be more bitter enemies to liberty of conſcience. Epiſcopacy had

had been reſtored by James I. and Charles I. whoſe ſupporting it was one great cauſe of the troubles that followed. Charles II. hated preſbytery, but was very unwilling to reſtore epiſcopacy again, leſt he ſhould involve his government in new troubles, but it was puſhed forwards with great zeal and accompliſhed.

Biſhop Burnet knew the Scotch clergy well, ſpeaks of theſe preſbyterian divines as a brave ſolemn people, their ſpirits were eager, and their tempers ſower, but they had an appearance that created reſpect, they viſited their pariſhes much, and were ſo full of ſcripture, and ſo ready at extempore prayer, that from that time they practiſed extempore ſermons, for they uſed after meals to read a chapter in the bible, and if it was agreeable expound it, by this means the people had ſuch a vaſt degree of knowledge, that the poor cottagers could pray extempore. It cannot be imagined to what a degree they were loved and reverenced by their people. Scandalous perſons were kept under ſevere diſcipline, being ſolemnly and publicly rebuked, ſtanding in church on the ſtool of repentance, making profeſſions of repentance, which many did with tears, exhorting others to take warning by them.

They had however but little learning, were ready to fly into great exceſſes of paſſion, affected in their deportment, flatterers of thoſe who admired them, and apt to make themſelves popular, by preaching againſt the ſins of courts, which the people having no ſhare in, delighted to hear. Biſhop Burnet adds, that thoſe who ſucceeded them, were mean and deſpicable in all reſpects, the worſt preachers he ever heard; ignorant to a reproach, and many of them openly vicious; that they were a diſgrace to their order, and to the ſacred function, and were indeed the dregs and refuſe of the northern parts. The few that were above contempt, or ſcandal were men of ſuch violent tempers, that they were as much hated as the others were deſpiſed. Which of theſe two parties would any man of common ſenſe think beſt fitted for the Chriſtian miniſtry? The former, one would imagine muſt be eſteemed ſo; and yet zealous epiſcopalians tell us, it is neither ſafe nor

lawful to hold communion with ſuch, and that their orders are null, whereas the latter are qualified for adminiſtering ordinances, and giving abſolution to poor ſinners.

Epiſcopacy was aboliſhed in Scotland by king William, who would not however have done it, had they not been his profeſſed enemies, and all thoſe who were zealous for him were equally zealous againſt it.

In the late rebellion the duke of Cumberland gave a very honourable teſtimony to the loyalty of the preſbyterian clergy, whereas the parliament found it neceſſary to lay the epiſcopal churches under freſh reſtraints, as fatal ſources of jacobitiſm, and dangerous ſeminaries where men were nouriſhed up in allegiance to a popiſh pretender, and in avowed averſion and diſloyalty to king George.

The perſecution againſt diſſenters, was not always carried on with the ſame warmth, the deſign of the court in proceeding to ſuch cruel extremities, was, that the nation might be inclined to favour the proteſtant nonconformiſts, and ſo under colour of a toleration the papiſts were to be ſcreened. The parliament however did not ſeem inclinable to moderate meaſures, and ſo oppoſed the power claimed by the king of diſpenſing with the laws againſt diſſenters, and granting indulgence to tender conſciences. The ſufferings of the diſſenters raiſed, as was expected, compaſſion in the minds of the people, inſomuch that their numbers viſibly increaſed after the fire of London, owing to want of churches and the indolence of the clergy, in performing the duties of their function, of which the king complained in very ſevere terms; for when complaint was made of ſome diſorders and conventicles, he ſaid, "The clergy were chiefly to blame, for if they had lived well and gone about their pariſhes, and taken pains to convince the nonconformiſts, the nation might have been well ſettled, but they thought of nothing but to get good benefices and keep a good table: they will do nothing, and many of them do worſe than if they did nothing." But the nonconformiſt miniſters were truly vigilant, and in the time of that dreadful plague, which cut off

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one hundred thouſand of the inhabitants of London, by eight or ten thouſand in a week, tho' the city was not near ſo large and populous as at preſent, moſt of the eſtabliſhed clergy, except a few worthy men, fled; deſerting their pariſhes at a time when their aſſiſtance was moſt wanted, and ſuch numbers were enquiring earneſtly, *what ſhall we do to be ſaved?* The ejected miniſters ventured to preach in the vacant pulpits, imagining they ſhould be juſtified by ſo extraordinary a caſe, and thus boldly faced death, and ſtood amongſt the arrows that fled at noon-day, many who were at church one day, being thrown into their graves by cart loads the next. But it will amaze all poſterity, that when they were thus hazarding their lives, for the poor diſtreſſed citizens, the parliament then aſſembled at Oxford, on account of the plague, paſſed the five mile act, which baniſhed them from their relations and friends. No wonder therefore that they were pitied.

In the year 1671. The king publiſhed his declaration for liberty of conſcience, delivering nonconformiſts from all penal laws, and granting them licences to open meetings; this was done without the conſent of parliament, which the nonconformiſts did by no means approve, and were not forward to accept of liberty in this way. They were however ſeverely cenſured for accepting it all, ſince it was built on a ſtretch of the prerogative, but it was juſtly anſwered, that liberty of conſcience being their natural right, no power upon earth could juſtly deprive them of it, whilſt they continued dutiful ſubjects. All ſuch laws are certainly in themſelves null and void, and if wicked men when in power will make and execute them, yet every perſon is fully juſtified in breaking through them, when opportunity offers, by whatever means obtained. It was reported by Dr. Stillingfleet to hurt the diſſenters, that the heads of the party had received ſmall penſions from court, to bribe them to be ſilent, and join intereſt with the papiſts. But Dr. Owen declared in print, that this was ſuch a frontleſs malicious lie, as impudence itſelf would bluſh at, and that the diſſenters however traduced, were ready to give the higheſt ſecurity that can be of their

ſtability

ſtability in the proteſtant cauſe. This indulgence continued till 1681, when the penal laws were again let looſe with the utmoſt fury; but in 1687, James the Second being then come to the throne, who as he was a papiſt himſelf was willing to ſecure thoſe of his own religion from perſecution, and the better to accompliſh this, iſſued out a declaration for a general liberty of conſcience to perſons of all perſuaſions whatſoever, and the year after made it more advantageous to the papiſts, and ordered it to be read in all churches and chapels, both in England and Wales, by which declaration diſſenters were not only ſet at liberty, but admitted to ſerve in all offices of profit and truſt. The diſſenters were very thankful for this liberty, but could by no means approve of the diſpenſing power, ſo that when there was a meeting of the miniſters, Mr. Howe declared againſt it, and Dr. Williams ſaid, "He had rather for his part, looſe his liberty, and return to his former bondage than declare for it," and in ſumming up the debate it was ſignified to the courtiers, that they were in general of the ſame opinion.

This diſappointed the court much, but they received the addreſſes of thoſe who came with high commendations, being willing to put the beſt face upon the matter they could. In theſe addreſſes they expreſſed their humble dependance on his majeſty to ſecure their rights and properties, but made no promiſes of obedience without reſerve. Some few ſpoke in higher ſtrains, than the elder, and more cautious miniſters approved, but biſhop Burnet admits, that thoſe who carried up ſuch addreſſes were mean and inconſiderable; others from an exceſs of joy, or ſtrong reſentment againſt their perſecutors gave too much countenance to the meaſures of the court, yet the body of them kept at a diſtance, and, "as thankful as they were for their liberty, (ſaid lord Halifax) they were fearful of the iſſue, neither can any number of conſideration amongſt them, be charged with hazarding the public ſafety, by falling in with the meaſures of the court, of which they had as great a dread as their neighbours."

Charles

Charles and James hoped by their rigour againſt diſſenters to open the way for a toleration, in which papiſts might be included, but ſo diſintereſted were the former, that when the teſt act was brought into the houſe of commons, which confined all places of profit and truſt to thoſe only who were of the communion of the church of England, the court party oppoſed it with all their might, and endeavoured to divide the others, by artfully propoſing that ſome regard might be had to proteſtant diſſenters, hoping by this means to clog the bill, and get it thrown out of the houſe, upon which alderman Love, a diſſenter and member of parliament for London, ſtood up, and ſaid, "He hoped the clauſe in favour of proteſtant diſſenters would occaſion no intemperate heats, and therefore hoped that ſince this was a conſiderable barrier againſt popery, the bill might paſs without any alteration, and that nothing might interpoſe till it was finiſhed. And then, ſays he, we will try if the parliament will not diſtinguiſh us from popiſh recuſants, by ſome marks of their favour; but we are willing to lie under the ſeverity of the laws for a time, rather than clog a more neceſſary work with our concerns. Theſe being the ſentiments of the leading diſſenters, both in the houſe and without, the bill paſſed the commons with little oppoſition *.

* If it be aſked why papiſts ſhould be excluded from offices, any more than other religious ſects? the anſwer is this. By acknowledging a foreign ſupreme power; by their infamous principle that oaths are not to be obſerved with heretics; and the eaſe by which they can obtain abſolution from the greateſt crimes, they are entirely unfit to be truſted. Nothing however but extreme neceſſity, (if that might) could juſtify making the Lords ſupper, which was deſigned to be a bond of unity and love, a mark of ſtrife and diviſion, but the continuance of this law is much more unjuſtifiable, ſince it diſqualifies many conſcientious men, who are true friends to their country from ſerving in thoſe offices, to which every good member of ſociety of whatever profeſſion has an undoubted right, and brings many profligate wretches to the Lords table who had rather ſtay away; their being forced to it, can never make them better. Civil teſts are ſufficient to qualify men for civil offices.

Great

Great encroachments were made on the liberties of the people, the charters were taken away from moſt of the corporations, ſo that the election of members to ſerve in parliament might be in a manner veſted in the court. Unreaſonable fines were laid on honourable perſons, merely for delivering their opinions on political matters; cruel whippings were inflicted, Mr. Johnſon, a clergyman, for publiſhing a writing, directed to the proteſtant officers of the army, to diſſuade them from being tools to the court, was degraded, ſentenced to ſtand three times in the pillory, to be fined five hundred marks, and to be whipt from Newgate to Tyburn, all which was executed with great ſeverity. But the ſevereſt loſs of all to the nation was that of the excellent lord Ruſſel, who was beheaded for being within the hearing of ſome treaſonable words; and the great Algernoon Sidney, chiefly for having what was called a ſeditious libel in his ſtudy. Both theſe were warm patriots, the latter is rendered immortal by his eſſay on government, which procured his condemnation, but is now read with admiration by every Briton; the former by his zeal in procuring a bill to exclude James II. from the throne, which noble deed was the cauſe of his death. Juries were now a ſhame to the nation, being packed, and ſo prepared to bring in verdicts as they were directed, and not as matter appeared upon evidence; and after the duke of Monmouth's rebellion, ſuch butcheries were practiſed in the Weſt, as England never before had ſeen. Such were the reigns of Charles II. and James II. the latter of whom indeed was all along the principal cauſe of the miſchief.

The clergy of the church of England, did almoſt without exception, preach up paſſive obedience and non-reſiſtance to ſuch a government, and Romans xiii. where we are commanded to be ſubject to the higher powers, becauſe they are ordained of God, was urged as if not only the order of government, but every particular magiſtrate was appointed of God. Is it not however moſt unreaſonable to think that a being who deſires the happineſs of his creatures, will expect them to obey ſuch as would make them miſerable? and becauſe

cauſe we muſt ſubmit to ſuch as are miniſters for good, we muſt likewiſe ſubmit to thoſe who are only the miniſters of evil. Such doctrines were however preached and defended, even a Tillotſon, could peſter lord Ruſſel with them juſt before his execution, and the duke of Monmouth was plagued on the ſcaffold with the ſame ſtuff. We were to ſee our rights trampled upon, and look for relief only by prayers and tears, like the lubberly clown in the fable, who when his cart was ſtuck in the mire, inſtead of whipping his horſes and putting his ſhoulders to the wheels, laid down likewiſe, and cried out upon Jupiter for help.

Thus did the clergy, and too many of them much worſe, being real abettors and ſupporters of tyranny, till the king ventured to encroach upon their particular privileges, and then the caſe was altered; the yoke was inſufferable, and they looked every where for help, and applied in their extremity to the diſſenters, with profeſſions of regret for their paſt conduct, and the moſt ſolemn aſſurances of the greateſt favour and lenity to them in better times. Malice itſelf cannot deny but that the diſſenters ſhewed an unuſual readineſs to join the church againſt popery their common enemy; had they through reſentment on account of their paſt injuries ſtood neuter, all would have been loſt, but they warmly concurred, even with their perſecutors for the common good, and king William III. of bleſſed memory, by the providence of a good God, worked out the deliverance. The manner in which theſe ſame clergymen afterwards uſed him, and how inveterate they were againſt the Hanover ſucceſſion is well known. Some of the greateſt and beſt men in the church, who ſupported its credit when the conduct of the body of the clergy was truly infamous, deſigned to bring about a comprehenſion, and by altering ſome things to bring the diſſenters who had deſerved ſo well of them into the pale. This was preſſed with great earneſtneſs by many of the temporal lords, but biſhop Burnet, though a friend to the deſign, argued ſtrongly for its being left to the convocation, "But I was convinced ſoon after, ſays he, that I had taken wrong meaſures, all their promiſes

promiſes were entirely forgot." They ſeemed to think with the papiſts, that oaths with heretics or ſchiſmatics are not binding. Inſtead of ſhewing a willingneſs to make the ſmalleſt alterations, they came to a reſolution, not to enter into any debates with relation to alterations.

Thus the church of England has been twice reſcued from the moſt imminent danger by men, for whoſe ſake its clergy would not move a pin. In the year 1660 the preſbyterians reſtored the king and conſtitution, without making any terms for themſelves, and at the revolution it fled for ſuccour to a preſbyterian prince, who together with fourteen thouſand Hollanders (who were alſo ſhamefully treated) of the ſame principles, and the warm concurrence of that party, here fixed it in a firm foundation, after which ſervices, biſhop Burnet tells us, "The clergy began to ſhew an implacable hatred to the non-conformiſts, and ſeemed to wiſh for an occaſion to renew old ſeverities againſt them."

It has been generally thought that the act of toleration would not have paſſed, had the clergy (thoſe in the higheſt orders of the church excepted, who by the bye were more liberal than their brethren) now been conſulted. By this act, ſuch were qualified miniſters who would ſubſcribe all the articles, except the 34th, 35th, 36th, the firſt clauſe of the 20th, and that part of the 27th article, touching Infant Baptiſm, when any ſcrupled it. This was a great relief to the diſſenters then, for the principles of liberty were not generally underſtood, and few acted upon the glorious proteſtant principle, indeed the only one on which a ſeparation from the church of Rome can be fully juſtified, of the ſufficiency of ſcriptures, independent of every other rule. Many however would have been glad of a greater latitude, but it was impoſſible then to obtain it, and ſuch as could not comply with theſe terms were expoſed to all the ſeverities of the old laws. Our brethren, the quakers, however, who ſcrupled any oaths, were permitted on ſuch occaſions, as they were uſually required, to make a ſolemn affirmation.

When

When popery was making ſuch haſty ſtrides, many of the clergy publiſhed continually ſuch excellent writings, as will do them immortal honour, and the diſſenters were cenſured as not joining in the combat. But they had been before-hand with them in their morning exerciſes againſt popery, their miniſters had actually writ againſt its errors through the whole reign of Charles II. and what was more, ſtood in the gap and expoſed themſelves to perſecution, leſt popery ſhould prevail. Beſides, the miniſters had been impriſoned, their books taken away, and therefore could not be prepared like thoſe who were at eaſe, and what perhaps not a little quickened their zeal, had their revenues at ſtake, when the nonconformiſt had nothing to looſe but their lives, which could not be very dear to men that were ſtarving, many of them in gaols, and languiſhing under ſuch cruel oppreſſions as papiſts themſelves could ſcarce have increaſed. Some of the diſſenters however, even in theſe circumſtances, did write; but their tracts being thought too warm were refuſed to be licenſed, and yet they were upbraided. However, diſſenters have ſhewn what they can do againſt popery by many excellent writings, particularly in the Salter's-hall lectures, which are well worthy of being read, being a compleat refutation of every abſurd doctrine, and every enormous practice.

It is impoſſible to make an exact computation of the number of ſufferers or eſtimate of the damages, ſuſtained by the diſſenters in the reigns of Charles II. and James II. for about the ſpace of twenty-five years; how many families were reduced to beggary; how many lives were loſt in ſtinking goals; how many miniſters were forced from their people, and forced to live as they could, five miles from them or any corporation; how many induſtrious tradeſmen were cut off from their trades, and their ſubſtance carried off by ſoldiers, and divided among idle, infamous informers. The vexatious ſuits in ſpiritual courts, and the expences attending them were immenſe.

One writer (ſee preface to Delaunes Plea, &c.) ſays that near eight thouſand periſhed in priſon in the reign

of Charles II. merely for diſſenting from the church in ſome points, which they were able to give good reaſon for, and that within the compaſs of three years they ſuffered in their trades and eſtates, at leaſt two millions. Another writer adds (Hiſtory of the Stuarts, p. 75) "That Mr. Jeremy White had carefully collected a liſt of the diſſenting miniſters and their ſufferings, and had the names of ſixty thouſand perſons who had ſuffered on a religious account, between the Reſtoration and the Revolution, five thouſand of whom died in priſon. King James offered him a thouſand guineas for this manuſcript, but he reſolved to conceal it that it might not appear to the diſreputation of the church of England, for which ſome of the clergy thanked him and offered him an acknowledgment, which he generouſly refuſed.

'Tis certain that beſides thoſe that ſuffered at home, great numbers retired to America and Holland. If we admit the diſſenting families of the ſeveral denominations, at that time in England, to be no more than one hundred and fifty thouſand, (no extravagant computation) and that each family ſuffered no more than the loſs of three or four pounds per ann. the whole will amount to twelve or fourteen millions; a prodigious ſum for thoſe times! but theſe are only conjectures; the damage done to the trade and property of the nation was immenſe, and the wounds made in the eſtates of private families were deep and large, many of whom to my certain knowledge (ſays Mr. Neal) wear the ſcars of them to this day.

When the proteſtant diſſenters roſe up into view as a diſtinct body, their long ſufferings had not very much diminiſhed their numbers, which was owing to their firmneſs and conſtancy, and was clearly proved to the world that they were not governed by humour but by conſcience; to their doctrine and manner of preaching, which was plain and practical, accompanied with warm addreſſes to the conſcience; to the ſeverity of their morals, at a time when the nation was ſunk into all kinds of vice and prophaneneſs, with their ſtrict obſervation of the Lord's-day, family prayer, and other religious duties; (in which it is to be lamented their de-

deſcendants are ſadly fallen off) to their careful and ſtrict education of their children, eſpecially by catechiſms, an excellent means to improve in religious knowledge; to their concern for a ſucceſſion of learned and able miniſters, on which account they encouraged private academies, and 'tis remarkable that many gentlemen and rich citizens, devoted their children to the miniſtry, when they had nothing in view but bonds and impriſonment; to the perſecuting zeal of the high church party, which was attended with an uncommon licentiouſneſs of manners, for to ſee men of bad morals, who ſcarce worſhipped God at all, perſecuting thoſe who worſhipped him according to their conveniences, inclined the hearts of many unto them; and finally, as the ſpirit and principles of the tories began to appear ruinous to the nation, the ſufferings of thoſe who had been always friends to the old conſtitution, raiſed their reputation with all true lovers of their country, many of whom appeared in their cauſe, and joined their congregations. Some were weary of perſecution and deſerted the cauſe, but what is very remarkable, ſeveral miniſters who had preferments in the church, quitted it even in the darkeſt times, declaring that a perſecuting church could never be a true one, and therefore took up their lot with the ſuffering party. If the civil magiſtrate can diveſt himſelf of all humanity and cut off any ſect, root and branch, it may in time be extinct; but fines, impriſonment, whipping, &c. eſpecially if endured with conſtancy, will generally attract eſteem, and even give ſtrength to a party.

It was impoſſible to hurt the diſſenters through the reign of king William, but no ſooner was queen Anne upon the throne than they endeavoured to cramp the toleration, by the bill againſt occaſional conformity. Some who uſually went to meeting, if choſen or preſented to any office of truſt or profit, did not ſcruple occaſionally going to church and receiving the ſacrament there, as the teſt law demands; and others who were churchmen, would ſometimes attend diſſenting congregations; this law enacted, "That if any perſons in office, who by the laws are obliged to qualify themſelves

ſelves by receiving the ſacrament, or teſt, ſhall ever reſort to a conventicle or meeting of diſſenters for religious worſhip, during the time of their continuance in ſuch office, they ſhall forfeit twenty pounds for every ſuch offence, and be diſqualified for any office for the future, till they have made oath that they have entirely conformed to the church, and not been at any conventicle for the ſpace of a whole year. So that no perſon in the leaſt office in the cuſtoms, exciſe, corporations, &c. could ever come within the doors of a meeting-houſe. This bill was brought into the houſe one ſeſſions after another, and warmly oppoſed, till at length it paſſed in the year 1711, with ſcarce any oppoſition at all; all the excuſe that the whigs made for their eaſineſs in this matter, was, that they gave way to it, to try how far the yielding to it might quiet the fears of thoſe who ſeemed to think the church was in danger. "There was a ſet of clergymen amongſt us (ſays Burnet) who would never be ſatisfied, as long as the toleration was continued, and they ſeemed reſolved to give out that the church was in danger, till a proſecution of the diſſenters ſhould be again ſet on foot." The cry of the church's being in danger was not heard of for three hundred years after our Lord's aſcenſion, when his religion was oppoſed by all the powers of the world, nor was it heard of here whilſt two popiſh kings were on the throne, unleſs we except juſt at the cloſe of James II. but in the glorious reign of king William it began; but their cries not being effectual, until queen Anne was on the throne, then they were very loud and too ſucceſsful. One Sacheverel, whom biſhop Burnet characterizes very juſtly, "As a bold inſolent man, with a very ſmall meaſure of religion, virtue, learning, or good ſenſe, railed at diſſenters and low churchmen, in ſeveral ſermons and libels, wrote without either chaſteneſs of ſtile, or livelineſs of expreſſion, all was one unpractiſed ſtrain of indecent and ſcurrilous language, aided and abetted by the clergy, who did generally eſpouſe him as their champion, enflamed the people to a degree which was ſcarce ever known upon any occaſion. Thoſe who would not

cry

cry up for the church were inſulted and knocked down." All the pews in five meeting-houſes were burnt, and had it not been for the guards, who were ſent to diſperſe them, the ſame would have been done by others, and a like fate was threatened to private houſes.

The clamours and diſturbances raiſed by this worthleſs fellow Sacheverel and his adherents, were quickly followed by a change in the miniſtry, in favour of the tories, and the diſſolution of the parliament. "To ſecure the elections (ſays biſhop Burnet) unheard of methods were uſed; in London, and in all the parts of England, but more remarkably in the great cities. The clergy, beſides a courſe for ſome months of inflaming ſermons, went about from houſe to houſe, preſſing their people to ſhew on this great occaſion, their zeal for the church, and now or never to ſave it. In a word, the practice and violence uſed in elections, went far beyond any thing that I had ever known in England."

By this tory parliament the aforenamed act was paſſed, and affairs remaining in ſuch hands through the remainder of this reign, the proſpect grew darker and darker. In the laſt year of her reign, in order to prevent the growth of ſchiſm, all diſſenters being ſchiſmatics with the high church gentry, the education of their children was taken out of the hands of their friends, and entruſted only with ſuch as were full and entire conformiſts. And if any ſchoolmaſter or tutor ſhould be willingly preſent at any conventicle of diſſenters, for religious worſhip, he ſhall ſuffer three months impriſonment, and be diſqualified from teaching ſchool for the future, unleſs he ſhall afterwards conform to the church of England, receiving the ſacrament at leaſt three times in one year, without having been preſent at any meeting whatever. And if any perſon thus licenſed ſhould teach any other catechiſm than that ſet forth in the book of common prayer, his license ſhall be taken away, and he be liable to the penalties of the act. This act was alſo to extend to Ireland, which as it abounded with papiſts, could not but tend greatly to weaken the proteſtant intereſt.

This vile act was proteſted againſt by thirty-three lords, (five being biſhops) and was carried in the upper houſe by ſeventy-ſeven againſt ſeventy-two, and was to have taken place on the firſt of Auguſt, but on that very day it pleaſed God to deliver us by the death of the queen, who was a pious good woman, and reigned glorioufly till ſhe fell into the hands of the tories, who obſcured the luſtre of her reign, and in the end broke her heart.

King George I. came to the throne with the acclamations of all the lovers of liberty, particularly of the diſſenters, and he was ſo well convinced of their ſteady regard to him, that in the fifth year of his reign he obtained the repeal of the afore-mentioned acts, not without oppoſition, ſeveral biſhops urging, as they did upon our late petition, that they ought to be preſerved *in terrorem*, and that it was needleſs to repeal them as they had not been executed. This plea was particularly urged by the late archbiſhop Wake, as great a pretender to moderation as any now on the bench. His majeſty would alſo have releaſed us from the teſt act, but this could not be effected. His late majeſty was an avowed enemy to all kinds of perſecution. One anecdote I received concerning him from a worthy divine, who had it from Mr. Whiſton's own mouth. When the methodiſts began to be much followed, it was rumoured that the biſhops had ſolicited the king to ſilence them. Mr. Whiſton deſired an audience of his majeſty (which he was never refuſed on account of the late excellent queen Caroline's regard for him) and told him what he had heard, but that he hoped his majeſty would not grant ſuch requeſt. The king replied, "Mr. Whiſton I have been applied to by one of the biſhops on this matter, but never whilſt I am king of England ſhall the hair of a ſubject's head be hurt on account of his religious principles.

The diſſenters ſoon after the toleration fell into heats amongſt themſelves about ſome high Calviniſtical principles, and afterwards on the doctrine of the trinity, which have produced many diviſions, but to their honour

honour be it ſpoken, that at a large meeting of their miniſters in and about London in the year 1719, when the firſt article of the church of England, or the anſwer in the aſſembly's catechiſm, relating to the trinity were propoſed as teſts, the majority (but three however) though moſt of them firm believers of the doctrines, rejected theſe and declared "ſcripture ſhould be the only teſt." Never did any aſſembly of divines before reſt ſatisfied with this, it is an honour which none but proteſtant diſſenters can claim.

And as there are but few more who can conſcientiouſly ſubſcribe to human teſts, the late application to parliament to relieve them from the danger of being forced to what they have not, what they cannot ſubſcribe, would have been a relief to nine out of ten. Some few oppoſed it, becauſe the ſcripture was ſubſtituted inſtead of the old form, inſiſting that the magiſtrate had no right to any religious teſt. This bill, brought into the houſe by Sir Harry Houghton, (a gentleman, who to his honour be it ſpoken, whilſt he diſapproves the forms of the church, openly diſſents from them, and is not aſhamed of profeſſing himſelf a proteſtant diſſenter) paſſed very eaſily through the houſe of commons, being oppoſed by no more than eleven. In the houſe of lords, the biſhops, almoſt to a man, oppoſed it, and not one of them defending it, it was rejected, though we have the ſatisfaction to find that ſome of the greateſt characters of the age, in both houſes, warmly eſpouſed our cauſe. It was ſaid, What occaſion for a repeal, when the laws have lain ſo long dormant? Let it be remembered that the great and excellent Dr. Doddridge had a proſecution commenced againſt him by ſome dignitaries of the church, as have many others, and ſome within theſe two years, for keeping ſchools; and the doctors Chandler, Foſter, and others, have been threatened for preaching. A ſword hangs over our heads, which may at leaſt be uſed, and it is well if thoſe who voted againſt the repeal would not uſe it, did not ſome prudential reaſons reſtrain them. The caſe of the diſſenters, by Mr. Manduit, (price only one ſhilling) ſtates every objection ſo clearly, and anſwers them

them ſo fully, that I rejoice in this opportunity of recommending it to all who would ſee every thing that can be urged on this ſubject.

The diſſenters, both here and in America, have been charged with perſecution, in oppoſing an American biſhop; our friends abroad are deſcended from thoſe, who to avoid the perſecution of the biſhops, fled from their native country to woods and deſerts, ſo that it is no wonder if they are not eaſily reconciled to it, and I have been aſſured that not one in ten of the epiſcopalians themſelves in the leaſt deſire it. The diſſenters here have no objection to a biſhop, merely ſpiritual, which they have been more than once told would be no biſhop at all. The impediment however does not ariſe from the diſſenters, but from our governors who will not conſent to it. However as we have been greatly miſrepreſented in this affair, eſpecially in a pamphlet juſt publiſhed, entitled, "A Letter to the Proteſtant Diſſenting Miniſters, on their late Application to Parliament,"—drawn up with an artful appearance of moderation; I refer the reader to Dr. Furneaux's excellent letters to Judge Blackſtone, letter 6. page 190—195. ed. II.—P. 140.—143. ed. I. This affair is there ſet in its true light, and fully vindicates us from the malevolent aſperſions of our adverſaries.

The diſſenters now are called by different names, preſbyterians, who are generally thought to reſemble the Scots church, but this is a very miſtaken notion; every ſeparate congregation with them makes a perfect church, without the leaſt dependance upon, or ſubjection to any other. The independants, who firſt roſe up as a party in oppoſition to the Scots preſbyterian model, continue the ſame, and the only difference betwixt them and thoſe, who are improperly called preſbyterians now, (for we are all really independants) is, that in and about London more particularly, thoſe are eſteemed independants who embrace the diſputed doctrines as explained in the aſſembly's catechiſm; the others, ſuch as incline to the contrary opinions. But this is no general rule.

The

The baptiſts differ from other diſſenters, in little or nothing but the mode and ſubjects of baptiſm. Our brethren the quakers*, have long been a diſtinct and a worthy body, bearing up under perſecution with amazing courage; when the officers came to diſturb them they would go quietly to priſon, when releaſed pay no fees, and go directly in the moſt public manner to their wonted places of worſhip, where they would ſit, even when they were pulled down about their ears, and themſelves inſulted in the groſſeſt manner. Their ſcrupuloſity about paying tithes has expoſed them to great hardſhips. One friend was a priſoner ten years for forty ſhillings; one, four years for one ſhilling; one, nine years for a ſmall tythe. Eighty pounds was levied on one for a debt of four pounds ten ſhillings and a penny; two hundred and thirty-ſeven pounds five ſhillings for ſeven pounds; upwards of twenty-four pounds for twelve ſhillings; and, aſtoniſhing to relate, one hundred pounds for eighteen pence. Two hundred and ninety two were impriſoned, and putting all the ſuits together, for every eleven pounds five ſhillings demanded, one hundred pounds had been levied. Theſe are but few inſtances out of ſome hundreds, ſufficient however to recommend them to the attention of the legiſlature. Accordingly the quakers petitioned in the year 1736, not to be delivered from the burden of tithes, but that the power of proſecuting them with ſuch bitterneſs might be taken from the clergy and juſtices of peace, empowered to ſeize their goods to what they thought the full value, together with the expence attending ſuch proceedings. One would think this ſhould have ſatisfied any reaſonable men; common humanity obliges us to take the eaſieſt method of recovering our rights, eſpecially as in the caſe of tithes, (which the Chriſtian clergy have not the leaſt

* The ſufferings which they underwent at their firſt riſe from the preſbyterians, were not owing ſo much to their religious principles, as to ſome very intolerable practices, running about naked, diſturbing public worſhip, and abuſing the magiſtrates; a conduct, which their deſcendants would abhor, but not much diſcountenanced by the generality juſt then.

claim

claim to, either from the laws of God or of nature.—See Serious Addreſs p. 44.) when any ſcruple to pay them, as ſupporting what appears to them contrary to the goſpel. The clergy however were all in a ferment about this, not becauſe they could not by this law have got their right, this was ſecured; but becauſe they could not weary the quakers with theſe expenſive proſecutions. The biſhops ſent letters all over the kingdom, "and with inſolence ſtill more alarming (ſays lord Harvey, in an excellent pamphlet publiſhed on this occaſion) menaced the members who brought in theſe bills, threatening to oppoſe them in the ſubſequent elections with all the weight of church influence." This did not intimidate the members, the bill paſſed the commons, and was nobly ſupported in the houſe of lords, but through the influence of the biſhops, rejected.

The methodiſts aroſe at firſt out of the church, are in general warmly attached to it, and though ſome few congregations in and about London have been increaſed by them, it is certain that whatever good they have in other reſpects, they have been rather a prejudice, in ſome places a great one to the diſſenting intereſt, and upon the whole have hitherto certainly done it hurt.

I hope from this brief but true account, thoſe who have been taught to deſpiſe their anceſtors, will learn to revere them as men who made a noble ſtand for their religious and civil liberties, imitate them in their ſtrict attachment to truth and holineſs, and as they live in a more enlightened age, improve upon ſuch great examples.

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